

Mexican Life

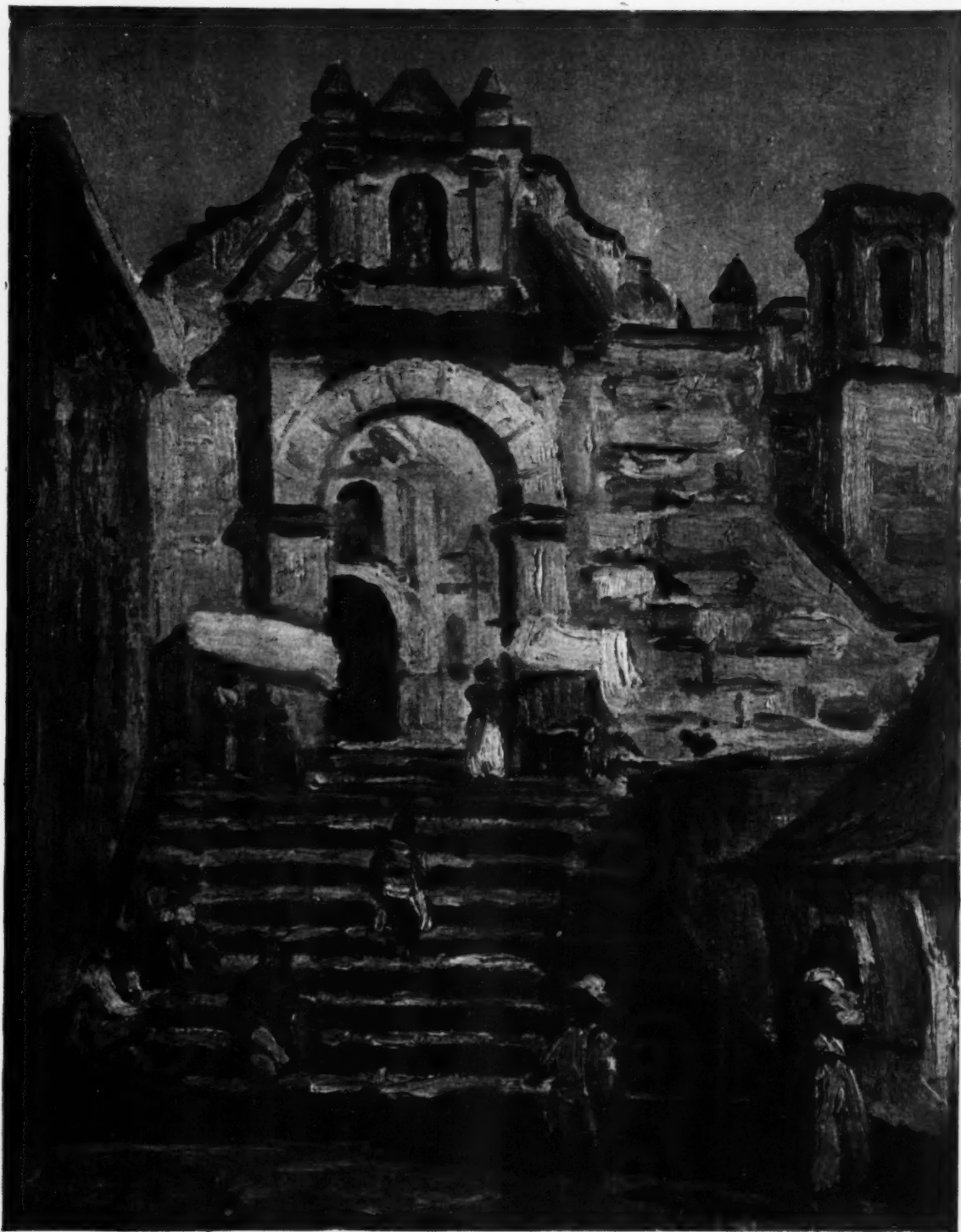
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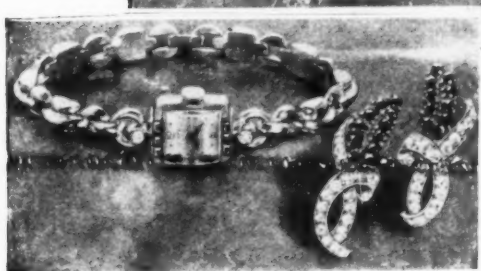
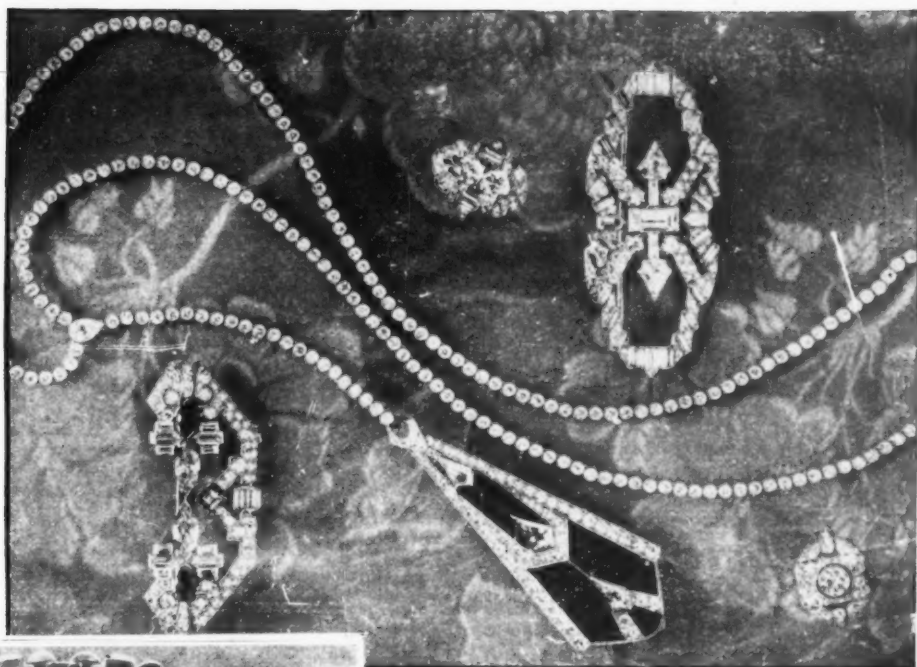
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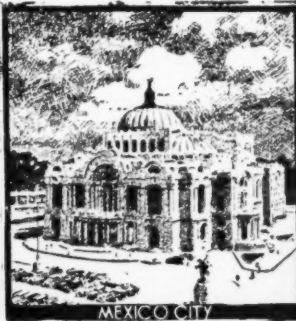
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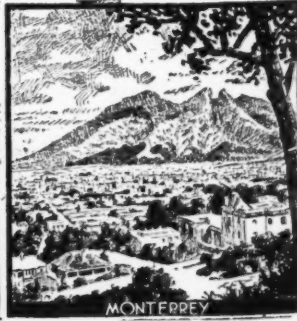
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS
EDITOR

The Growth of Mexico's Population

ACCORDING to the figures computed in the national census of 1950 Mexico's population has reached a total of 25,743,314. This number, exceeding highest expectations, signifies an increase of 6,989,762, or that or 31.8 percent, over the population figure of 1940, which was that of 19,635,552. It also reveals the fact that Mexico is one of the fastest growing countries in the world.

In the distribution of this unprecedented increase the most conspicuous figures are those of 84.2 percent for the Federal District and of 187.5 percent for the Northern Territory of Baja California. The population of the Federal District has grown during the past decade from 1,757,530 to 3,049,372, and that of the Northern Territory of Baja California from 78,907 to 226,891. Following these, the states of Tamaulipas, Sonora and Morelos had the largest increase, while the states of Hidalgo, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Oaxaca and Queretaro the smallest.

Of the 2,221 municipalities in the Republic, the following had the largest increase: Reynosa, Tamps., 263.0 percent; Tijuana, B. C., 258.6; Mexicali, B. C., 239.9; Acapulco, Gro., 216.4; Matamoros, Tamps., 191.8, and Ciudad Juarez, Chih., 149.4 percent. The group of municipalities with an increase of from 50 to 100 percent comprises: Torreon, Chihuahua, Durango, Irapuato, Leon, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, Mérida, Celaya, Salamanca, Gomez Palacio, Los Mochis, Mazanillo, Ciudad del Carmen, Culiacán and Nuevo Laredo.

On the whole, the increase in population has been more pronounced in the Northern section of the country than in the center or the South, and mainly in such regions where industrial and agricultural development has expanded local economy and is providing new sources of livelihood.

It is a notable fact that immigration has played but a nominal role in the accelerated growth of Mexico's population, that of the six million in added population, immigration at most accounts for a hundred thousand. The growth, moreover, would have been even more pronounced had it not been for the voluminous and continuous emigration of Mexicans to the United States. To be exact, while during the foregone decade Mexico absorbed a hundred thousand immigrants, approximately ten times that many Mexican citizens have abandoned the country.

The growth therefore must be attributed to the basic contributive factors of high birth rates and diminishing mortality, to the margin accrued between these two phenomena. The following official figures reveal the extent of this margin: Infantile mortality, representing 109 per each thousand births in 1940, declined to 98 per thousand in 1950. The figure of births for the year 1949 is that of 1,109, 446, while that of mortality is 438,278. Thus the increase in population during that year amounted to 671,168.

The two underlying factors attest, on the other hand, a great improvement in the social and economic conditions of the nation—an improvement that must be mainly ascribed to progressive and able administration.

Following a plan traced by the government, Mexico has undergone in the course of the past decade an industrial and agricultural expansion without parallel in its history. Its vast industrial development during that period is revealed in the figures of capital investment, which in 1940 represented a sum of 790 million pesos and rose to over four billion at the end of 1950. Industrialization has radically altered the country's economic structure. It has created a new field of employment for many thousands of Mexican workers; it has eliminated the need of buying abroad most of the staple manufactured commodities the nation consumes, and it has provided an outlet for its native raw materials.

Mexico's agricultural expansion, likewise to a very large extent the result of a comprehensive government program, has fairly kept pace with its phenomenal industrialization. Great extensions of tillable soil, added to the national acreage by numerous irrigation systems built by the government in recent years, ample credit facilities, and the introduction of modern equipment and methods, have contributed toward a signal increase in the size of the national crop. Solely during the past four and a half years, or since Miguel Alemán assumed the Presidency, annual agricultural production has increased from less than five million metric tons to almost seven million.

Such rapid progress in agriculture and industry would have been impossible without the expansion in the system of communication, which during the past ten years has also surpassed all former records. The hitherto isolated peninsulas of Yucatán and Baja California have been integrated with the main body of national territory through the construction of new railways, while an extensive network of new highways has opened vast and undeveloped regions for agricultural and industrial exploitation.

The growth of population has been, moreover, accelerated by the official endeavors in the terrain of public health and education. The marked reduction in the nation's mortality rates has been due as much to progress in the economic field as to organized campaigns against such destructive and endemic disease as malaria, smallpox and tuberculosis. Material progress, on the other hand, has been stimulated by the progress in popular education, by the creation of thousands of new schools and the sustained campaign against illiteracy.

The foregone facts and figures lead us to the obvious conclusion that the great increase in Mexico's population clearly signifies a great improvement in its general norms of life.

The Mountain of Pity

By Arthemise Goertz

THERE is an Arabian Nights's tale connected with the Monte de Piedad, Mexico's national pawnshop and the oldest banking institution in the Republic. Like everything else around the "zócalo," the "Mountain of Pity" had its story. It was founded in 1775, by Pedro Romero de Terreros, with a third of a million capital—a charitable organization whose purpose was to lend money on personal property at low rates of interest, to free the poor from the greed of private loan-sharks.

Pedro Terreros was a Santa Claus instead of a Shylock, but he could afford it. He owned the bonanza mine of Mexico, the famous Real del Monte at Pachuca, great silver city not far from the Capital. Terreros was not always rich; he had been a mule-driver until he struck silver in 1739. His riches became fabulous. He loaned Carlos III of Spain a million dollars (which the monarch never paid back) and presented the Royal Navy with two warships fully equipped. If the muleteer-miner was generous, so was the king. What matter if he gave only soft-soap in return for silver? It was a silver-tongued exchange, anyway. Carlos gave the Mexican a title—created him Count of Regla.

The Count invited his sovereign to visit him, promising that he would pave the road from Veracruz to the Capital—some two hundred and fifty miles—with bullion for the royal coach, and that he would plate the walls of the royal bedroom with silver and stud the paths of the garden with ingots of the precious metal. The King never came, but the Count carried out his lavish ideas when his children were baptized. The procession of guests and "padrinos" dined from silver plates and walked on bars of solid silver.

Shortly after the Count's death a subterranean river burst into the Real del Monte mine, and to-day he is remembered chiefly as founder of the Monte de Piedad. His bust graces the front of the building, looking down benignly on the poor devils who come to pawn their treasures and the tourists and bargain-hunters in search of sensational buys. The loans range from centavos to thousands of pesos, and anything that has the slightest value can be pledged, except—fortunately—livestock. And so, the name of the muleteer-count who so loved pomp and luxury is recalled to-day only in a pile of dusty wares which fills the red tezontle structure in the Zócalo.

Of such little ironies is life composed...



Etching.

By Francisco J. Vázquez.



Water Color.

By Helen Young.

Doña Chabela

By Dane Chandos

NOW, in the fall, we were in a sort of second spring. Trees came into bud, the papayas were fruiting, the violets were in second bloom, and on the shore were small clumsy calves and frisky foals and baby burros with puzzled faces. One of the foals, with a white blaze between its eyes and a brown coat the texture of a very expensive velvet carpet, stared at me for a startled moment and then hurried round behind Mama, whereupon Mama, without bothering to find out what had scared her offspring, gave a hearty hind kick, just in case. The duck was sitting, and Silvanito unearthed a clutch of turtle's eggs from somewhere. Yet this was not an unusual fall. We had some real autumnal days, brisk, blue-skied, fresh. But the clouds were still hanging about, and the sunset plunged its rays into still, shineless water, where colors were drowned, leaving on the surface glimmers and glitters proper to seashells, soap bubbles and opals. On one of these evenings I got out my little collection of opals and turned them this way and that, catching echoes of the opalescence of the lake.

Not many people like opals. I always suspect that many who will not confess to the superstition nevertheless, in fact, entertain some unconscious fear of them. To me they are among the most beautiful of precious stones, alive with "the bright fire of the ruby, the splendid purple of the amethyst, the green

sea of the emerald, all scintillating together in an incredible play of light," as Pliny described them. The stone is curious, for though it is usually tinted with some prevailing color, its glitters result, not from any pigmentation, but simply from the refraction of light in the cracks that fissure it. The more cracks, the more glitters. It is delicate—both soft and brittle—and it is also porous, so that it must never be immersed in any liquid.

Until the discovery of the Australian fields, all Europe's opals came from Hungary. Nowadays Australian stones are the most prized, but I own some beautiful Hungarian opals in which the most brilliant fires flash through a milky mist. Since I like opals, I have naturally found my way in Mexico to Querétaro, where I have invariably spent my time poking about in all the shops where opals are sold so that, till recently, I had never visited the Hill of the Bells with its chapel erected on the spot where Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía were executed. Mexican opals are not of the best. Few can really be classed as gem stones, and many have only a few gleams of fire. There are quantities of yellow-red ones, which I call salad opals, their tomato tones are usually shot with lettuce green. There are many, too, whose filmy red and brown shades suggest tea barely tinged with milk. There are some, pale and watery as moonstones, which have no glitter, but which, at certain angles, flush with

a uniform glow of color like the opals of Hosako in Japan, and some of these are very charming. There are also blue, peacock-flashing stones, but these are usually small. However, if you find in opals the fascination that I do, you can pass agreeable hours in Querétaro, turning over the stones and occasionally bargaining over some scrap of blue flame, some glass-pale cabochon that, as you turn it, sheens all rose and lilac. Your pleasure will not cost you much, and whenever you turn out your store you are in the magic cave of all the fairy tales. The trouble is that, though I always mean not to, I somehow often give my Mexican opals away, and then I have to go to Querétaro again. On this occasion, looking at my stores, I saw that I still had one that showed the change rather than the play of color. I remembered that Doña Chabela had said she had never seen one, and I decided to give it to her.

Doña Chabela is sentimental, hot tempered, generous, mean, cheerful, and romantically devoted to tombstones all at once. She is immensely energetic and is always doing twenty things at the same time. She has a week-end house in Ajijic. The Cornishmen who many years ago worked the silver mine built at the foot of the hills a house, which after their departure fell slowly into ruin. This was bought by Doña Chabela and her husband. They repaired it in spots and added to it in spots, so that it is now a rambling structure full of surprises. Every now and then Don Sergio thought he would add a coal shed, or Doña Chabela wanted what she called a laboratory for extracting her honey from the combs, or they thought they would have a new dining room. But the room never fulfills its destiny, for every weekend they come down from Guadalajara accompanied by hordes of friends and relatives, and sooner or later every room becomes a bedroom. Doña Chabela herself is very knowledgeable about cooking, about everything to do with a garden, a huerta, bees, poultry, cattle, and crops. I have often asked her help or advice, and she constantly sends me presents of fruit from her well-tended trees.

The next morning I walked slowly up the village and on to her house. I found her in the patio.

"I know what you've come about," she said. "That pit the workmen left when they were getting gravel to fill your terrace. It would be troublesome to cut a drain all the way down to the shore, and spraying the water that collects is ugly and expensive. In just a minute I'll tell you what to do." As she spoke she fastened three buttons of her housecoat, one of which at once came undone again, releasing a bubble of pink flesh. "I'll come back at once. I left my typewriter down in the garden last night. Look, here is a copy of the 'Raza de Bronce.' I don't believe any poetry can be as beautiful as Spanish."

She swept off, followed by five or six children who had been standing about in the patio, and I started to read Amado Nervo's rolling lines about the Indian, the Race of Bronze. A man and woman came in from the road, said good morning, sat down, and began to eat grapes, throwing the pips on the tiled floor. A fat woman pulled a bed out of a room and began to make it in the patio. From the kitchen, where about a dozen people seemed to be cooking at once, came the sounds of terrific frying. Suddenly Doña Chabela came back, carrying a hen.

"Look," she said, "the poor thing. She's new and all the others have been pecking her."

The hen had a deep wound on the back of its head and seemed very frightened. Doña Chabela went to the cabinet radio, opened it, and found a Worcester-

"Luisito," she called to a small boy I had noticed and who was half asleep in a rocking chair, "go into my room and bring me the cotton. It's on top of a sack full of corn, with Sergio's old hat, or else it's in that big sugar crate with my knitting and the garden hose. Now—"

She poured alcohol from the sauce bottle over the hen's wound, using an enormous quantity and splashing it all over the floor. The boy brought the cotton. "Now fetch some banana fiber," she said.

The boy went out into the huerta. After a few minutes a girl, considerably older, came with the fiber, and Doña Chabela tied a rakish bonnet of cotton over the hen's head. Then she produced a bit of string from a drawer, tied one end to the hen's leg and the other to her own ankle.

"I brought you this opal," I said. "You see, it looks like water, but turn it and it's all almond green."

"Can I pick some oranges?" asked the girl. "Oh, did I tell you my mother is coming today, with my three brothers?"

"Everything's full," said Chabela. "I don't know what we can do. What a lovely stone. You need banana trees," she added to me.

The boy called Luisito came back with the typewriter, which was covered with mango peelings. Doña Chabela flicked off the peelings, put a piece of paper in the machine and began to type furiously.

The man and woman who had been eating grapes finished them and got up.

"Now we're going," they said. "Until presently, Chabe. Where can we buy a little pig?"

"Tiburcia has one," answered Doña Chabela, still typing. "She lives down by the church. Do you like the book? Mexican poetry is very beautiful. Bananas soak up water. I shall treasure this opal."

From a drawer of the table she produced a little box of cough lozenges and put the opal in with them. Suddenly a woman in black satin arrived. She had an elaborate hair-do, and had obviously come straight from the city.

"Chabe!" she cried, throwing wide her arms.

Doña Chabela jumped up, and for a few minutes all was embraces and laughter and little cries of "how good to see you again" and "what a miracle." While the hen tethered to Doña Chabela's ankle flopped and fluttered.

"I was just writing to you," said Doña Chabela. "Now I needn't. I present Señor Chaudos, Conchita, a relative of mine."

"I've come for a week," said Conchita. "Have you a little bed for me? Or shall I sleep in a tree with the fowls?"

"Of course, Conchita," said Doña Chabela. "You shall sleep with me, and Lolita and Lupita can go with Tere and Bibiana, instead of Dora and she can go with the cook; she's very tiny, and the cook has fleas but no bugs. Oh—I'd quite forgotten—Carmencita said her mother and three brothers were coming today—well, we'll put a wide bed in the new henhouse for them. The plaster isn't quite dry, but never mind. Now sit down and tell me everything you've been doing."

They chattered away, and members of the party drifted in and out of the patio, some of them greeting Conchita with streams of emotion, some of them just saying good morning and not being introduced. Carmencita arrived and asked for some playing cards, which Doña Chabe found in the eupboard of her night table. The fat woman came out into the patio, said "Well, it's you, Conchita," and pushed her made bed back into her room. A man who had not appeared before, in brown trousers, pink shirt, and purple sus-

Continued on page 66



Photograph.

By E. Vives.

In Morelia

By Hudson Strobe

LIKE the cathedral and the long clean avenue of colonial houses, the central plaza of Morelia is most satisfying. At first glance, except for occasional motorcars, Captain Lyons would find the place more or less as he saw it in 1826. "The plaza," he wrote, "is remarkable as having broad piazzas on three of its sides, and the fine cathedral isolated from all other buildings bounding it on the east. A crowded market is held here, and the venders display their goods, as is the general custom, beneath the shade of rude mat umbrellas."

The palm-leaf umbrellas have now become écorché-colored awnings, and the booths of the venders extend down lesser streets to the south until they reach the permanent roofed market several blocks away. Though the physical aspects look much the same after twelve decades, the psychic atmosphere is considerably changed. Class distinctions have been drastically leveled. All the people seem adequately clothed. There are no rags, no beggars. But in some of the booths, where there is a conglomeration of trashy knickknacks and Japanese gewgaws, the shopkeepers' faces look as artificial as the tinsel they sell.

"For the most part," Thérèse observed, "the Indians at Toluca sell their own handicrafts and look genuine."

Here many of the Indians looked oddly phony. And some of the mestizos strutted with an unwholesome bravado, as if they were coming to learn the price of gadgets, but losing the sense of values.

"It's not fitting for young girls to wear those cheap artificial flowers when the stalls abound in fresh blossoms," I said.

Looking at the Indians standing about the plaza and the booths of the al-fresco market in 1943, and vaguely measuring how far they had come in a century and twenty-two years of Mexican independence, I remarked to Thérèse and Wagus that though the Spaniard in Mexico exploited the Indians in the most shameful and sometimes savage manner, he at least did not kill them off until they became a negligible unit, as we did in the United States. He did not push them back by force or trickery to reservations, as we did. He did not attempt to exterminate whole tribes, as did the Spaniards in Argentina. He set up his European culture in the midst of them and worked them into the extraordinary fabric that is Mexico today. He intermarried with them, which the white American did only in the rarest instances. Yet Spain and Mexico never really mingled harmoniously except in architecture and in art. The social structure was wrought in a welter of rivalry, mutual contempt, and distrust, not only between whites and Indians, and whites and mestizos, and mestizos and Indians, but of whites among themselves, those born in Spain and those born in Mexico. During his mission to Mexico, Mr. Ward was considerably surprised at the intensity of class feeling. In 1829, he wrote:

"It became, at last, a passion, which induced them to prefer the ties of native country to the blood. The

son, who had the misfortune to be born of a Creole mother, was considered as an inferior, in the house of his own father, to the European bookkeeper or clerk, for whom the daughter, if there were one, and a large share of the fortune, were reserved. "Eres Criollo, y basta!"—(You are a Creole, and that is enough!)—was a common phrase amongst the Spaniards when angry with their children; and was thought to express all the contempt that it is in the power of language to convey. It was a term of ignominy, a term of reproach, until time taught those, to whom it was applied, to use it rather as an honourable distinction, and to oppose it to that of *Gachupin*, as designating the party of those infatuated men, who imagined that the circumstances of having been born in the arid plains of Castille, or La Mancha, gave them a moral, and intellectual superiority, over all the inhabitants of the New World."

In 1943 a Spaniard was still called a *gachupin*, with a contemptuous curl of the lip, but few enough *gachupins* pass through Morelia's plaza now. And Spaniards are no longer given eminence in what is called "society" because of their Continental birth. But the Spaniards still are prominent in business even if they are not much in evidence on the streets. They are the moneylenders, openly or through agents, and often the leading manufacturers and merchants, both wholesale and retail. And to them belong some of the best grocery shops. They have more enterprise and initiative than the average Mexican. And though the Mexicans dislike them, they are pleased to have the Spanish immigrants come because, as they say, "they lighten our nation's complexion."

It seemed strange to us, as we sat in the plaza commenting and speculating on the social fabric, that this beautifully preserved city should have been the nurse or such potent revolutionary forces. Here the most tearing physical and ideological contentions have taken place. Only a few paces between streets separated the birth-places of Morelia's two most famous sons, José María Morelos and the Emperor Agustín de Iturbide. The latter was born in his Spanish father's fine town house, into well-to-do comfort and high provincial social position. The former, a mestizo with a purported strain of Negro blood, was dropped by his peasant mother behind a stranger's door, without benefit of midwife or a manger's straw. The country carpenter Manuel Morelos had brought his spouse to market that last day of September 1765, and in the street her time of childbearing came upon her so suddenly that she was carried into the nearest house and laid on the stone pavement behind the door, where the event was quickly over. The very spot is marked today, and commemorated with trumpeting words—"Not only the cradle of liberty for Mexico but for the whole world."

Iturbide's silver-spoon birth came also in late September but eighteen years after that of Morelos, when José María was a husky peon mule-driver. The two home-town boys, who did the most to bring about the independence from Spain, became mortal rivals, and in the first years of the rebellion Iturbide fought against Morelos for Spain more violently than he later fought for Mexico's independence. At twenty-five Morelos left his job as farm laborer to study for the priesthood, where he was instructed by Father Hidalgo, the priest whose *Grito de Dolores* in 1810 launched the fight for freedom. At the age of fifteen, young Iturbide considered his own education completed and became a second lieutenant in a regiment of provincial infantry. Subsequently both men developed remarkable military genius. Morelos became the commander in chief of the rebel forces, while the younger man as

colonel brought about his townsman's final ruin and temporarily saved Mexico for the Spanish Crown.

It is one of history's little ironies that Iturbide who was chiefly responsible for strangling Mexico's independence under the leadership of the fighting priests, should himself have won that independence less than a decade later. On September 27, 1821, on his thirty-eight birthday, mounted on a prancing black horse, Iturbide made his triumphant entry into Mexico City as the strong man who had severed Mexico forever from the rule of Spain. In 1822, by scheming to get himself "consecrated and crowned" as Emperor Agustín I, he became historically the first native-born ruler of Mexico since Cuauhtémoc, the noble nephew of Montezuma II. But his pretentious glory was short-lived. Within a year the imperial dynasty he had founded crumbled before jeering mockery, and he was forced into exile. On his return from abroad without permission in July of 1824 this hero of Mexican independence was summarily riddled with bullets by an executioner's squad. Before he had reached his forty-first birthday the earthly blaze of the meteoric Iturbide was completely extinguished.

For some years the mortal remains of the two rival liberators who fought for such opposed motives and ideals—one for the common man, one for the privileged—reposed under the same roof in the cathedral of Mexico City. Much later, the dust of Morelos was accorded extraordinary honor and removed to the vault in the Monument of Independence. But soon after the shooting of the whilom Emperor, the name of the city of his birth was changed from Valladolid to Morelia in honor of the one-time mule-driver.

At first dusk the Indians who live at a distance begin to pack up their unsold goods and their meager purchases in preparation for the trot home. They find it less tiring to trot than to walk. We watched one family start off. The father was first in line, with a great bulging bag on his back. The mother next took her place, with a baby secured in her rebozo, papoose-fashion, and with a brace of submissive hens dangling from each hand. A grandmother stood next with a bright woven basket in the crook of an arm. A yearling boy with a smaller sack like his father's came next, and then two girls who broke the single file and ran together, carrying some stalks of flowers. As they moved off their silhouettes against the background of church wall made a living frieze of singular charm. Though another drizzle had just begun, they seemed undaunted, and jogtrotted rhythmically, with masklike half-grins upon their faces.

"They can trot like that for twenty miles," said Señor Sánchez, who had joined us, "and never seem to tire."

"Have they flashlights?" Wagus asked.

"They can find their way in the dark like cats."

"They look happy enough," Thérèse said. "Much happier than the poor Indians at Toluca."

"Ah, that was this morning!" said Señor Sánchez. "By now at Toluca perhaps they too have had enough pulque to make them forget their troubles. They say a husband and a wife make compacts that one stays sober enough to guide the other home. Husbands and wives never get typsy at the same time."

From the shelter of a projecting balcony we watched the family's orderly trotting as they took to the middle of the street. There was something so timeless and so harmonious in the movement of the file. And then a man in a cart said something that halted the leader. Each runner stopped precisely in his tracks, like the mechanical figures that appear to mark the hours in certain old medieval clock towers. The brief colloquy ended, the trotting was resumed—with exact intervals between the runners.

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Etching.

By Magdalena Casa Madrid.

Nahuatl Spring Song

By Herbert J. Mangham

NOTHING I had read prepared me for that carnival. Many writers have described Mexican fiestas, but usually from the point of view of the Visiting White Lady: the author may wear pants, but the attitude remains the same. A fiesta's no subject for objectivity.

The frequency and spirit of celebrations in Tepoztlán, Morelia, is explained in part by its isolation. Although only a short distance from Mexico City, it is at the end of a by-road and not so long ago could be reached only by footpaths.

The pre-Lenten carnival is one of the two big fiestas of the year, the other being a historical pageant on September 8. On Friday and Saturday there is a tepid rodeo with local plow animals, and a banquet to the bus company employees of *barbacoa* (barbecued meat), *tortillas* (corn cakes), and *pulque*, that inevitable vinegarish distillation of the *maguey* cactus. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, the program is band and orchestra music all morning, *danzantes* (native dancers in costume) from three until hunger overbalances their enthusiasm, and then dancing to the music of three dance orchestras in the market place until some hour in the morning.

The *danzantes* are the true carnival. Most of them are young men and boys, although a few older men can never resist the urge. They always wear shoes, an indicative item, as a pair may mean two weeks' wages; most *danzantes* of other regions are content with their daily footgear, usually *huaraches*

with soles cut out of old automobile tires and secured to the bare feet by leather thongs. Their ankle-length silk robes of all colors are edged around the yoke with lace and have a panel in back suspended from the shoulders on which may be embroidered anything from a traditional Aztec design to a bathing beauty. The article that gives them distinction among all Mexican *danzantes* is the headpiece, a large and heavy boat-shape, intricately worked in beads, spangles, sequins, bright-colored threads, and sometimes small mirrors or porcelain heads, with three erect plumes on one side. Many of the youths carry a seltzer bottle of scented water intended to wear down some *muchacha's* male-resistance, although everybody gets sprayed.

The costume is completed by a mask with a pointed beard. These masks have been made by the same family for three generations. There are at least five totally different explanations of their significance. Most of the *danzantes* I queried did not know or think it important, in which they are right. Deep down in their breasts they know that the whole carnival is a spring song, and not of the Mendelssohn caliber.

* * *

Most Mexican fiestas begin at an unpredictable moment determined by the spirit of the crowd and the *danzantes*, which is annoying to schedule-bound

tourists; but the Tepoztlán carnival starts promptly at a time agreed upon. So, at three o'clock Sunday afternoon, a skyrocket exploded and the band, which had been practicing remorselessly for many nights, blared forth on the hill above me.

Almost anything looks interesting coming down that steep, narrow, rock-inlaid lane, with the flowers burgeoning over the walls on each side—if only a stray cow; but a procession makes the skin prickle. First the man releasing skyrockets. Then two men slowly waving great banners. Then the leaping *danzantes*, catching and throwing back the sun's rays like young fire-gods. Then the puff-cheeked band. Then the populace. Lastly the dogs, Delfino and Adolfo, with their cornets; the little barber, with a trombone precisely the same length as himself; Estanislao grimly clanging his cymbals—all were too engrossed to notice an admiring friend on the sidelines.

Our timing brought us to the square just a moment after the groups from the other two barrios. The town is divided into seven barrios, but it has only three bands. Some day there may be one for each barrio, and then what a carnival!

The other two barrios had more *danzantes*, but we had the best band. Once around the square, and then the grand entrance into the plaza with its waiting spectators, most of them massed on the high bank to the west.

All of the Tepoztecos came at some time or other, and most of the Indians from the seven nearby villages. Earnest little brown pilgrims from distant Puebla with bundles on their backs and severe straw hats high on their heads stopped for a glimpse before strutting onto the shrine at Chalma. There were occasional tourists who had encountered rumors. Inevitably that little band of epicene Englishmen from Cuernavaca had heard that we were amusing and came for a half hour of epigrams; a half hour was enough, because they were so picturesque in themselves, with their gay scarves, their pastel panties, their pretty bare feet encased in choice huaraches.

Most people would place a band in the middle of the plaza and let the *danzantes* move around it, but not the Tepoztecos. Each band follows its group around the circle, all three playing different tunes. The effect is much more exhilarating. Stravinsky would swoon.

Some of these little men appear almost feminine, with their abundant hair, their smooth faces, their small hands and feet, and their slender, graceful bodies; but their shoulders can bear nearly as heavy burdens as their burros. Frequently they dance all the way to a shrine from their distant homes. The Tepoztlán Indians danced on Sunday from three to nine, and then returned, still wearing their heavy headpieces, to foxtrot till three.

* * *

The second day, the spirit grew. About six, the *danzantes* began to draw in their friends. About half past, I was pulled in. At first I seemed to be only hopping. Then an arm slipped across my shoulders and gently detached me from my companion. It belonged to Pedro, a youngster who often joined a group plying me with eager questions about the war and the world. With his perfect sense of rhythm, he soon perfected me in the steps.

The *danzantes* have five traditional tunes, each of which sets one to bouncing like a ping-pong ball. They mean more to Tepoztecos than the national anthem. One may hear them whistled, hummed or played any place at any time. One has a six-four rhythm, another a seven-eight—a figure for every measure of two tri-

plets for the first four beats and one note each for the last three; try to match that in other national folk musics! The steps are simple but subtle. When mastered, they release unsuspected springs.

There is much whirling. When the *danzantes* pair with their friends, the movement varies the vertical with the lateral. Equilibriums did not seem to suffer any more from the frequent sampling of tequila, pulque, beer, and ponche (a regional favorite compounded of hot water, lemon juice, sugar, and alcohol) than from lemonade. When I went home for supper, I found the family had set it on my table and gone to bed. It was 10:40. I had danced four hours thinking it was one. I swallowed my milk and buns, and returned to the plaza to foxtrot until three. My confused memory of that night is a surrealist study of all the colors of the spectrum flashing about me, spectators' faces rearing back to avoid my feet when it came my turn to be swung, and a water pipe that had to be negotiated each time around the plaza.

I saw no signs of weariness the next day. That night the three groups swelled until they formed an almost unbroken moving circle. The foxtrotting continued until seven in the morning, when a serenade by the bands was supposed to end the carnival. The orchestra members stole away to their rest, gaunt, pitiable spectres scattering before the light of the sun.

* * *

But the *danzantes* still had their costumes and their urge. So on Ash Wednesday, while the rest of the world donned sackcloth and ashes, they again donned their colors. Oh, they made the conventional gestures—attended mass, put a charcoal mark in the middle of their foreheads, and ate the traditional dish of egg floating in thin tomato sauce; but they wouldn't let a conventional calendar date cut short the rites of spring.

Such musicians as still had a workable lip united in one band. As most of them were our men, the procession started in our barrio. Our musicians turned out to be not only the best but the most durable. The band this time struck up at four, and intoned a closing hilarious discord in front of the church shortly after nine, the town's only gringo waving a banner at the head of the homeward procession.

Each carnival results in several marriages. One youth, although convalescent from a serious illness, insisted on dancing, drank a lemonade while overheated, and contracted a paralysis of the throat from which he died, an incident which has been used as an argument against soft drinks. One young man came to the doctor with tears streaming to tell him that his wife had left him that morning, refusing to put up any longer with his drinking. The children were home crying, and he was brokenhearted. The doctor advised him to take the children to his mother and go himself to a relative in another village where he would escape the blare of the carnival. But the young man recoiled; he had his costume—he had to dance—and that afternoon he did dance. While he danced, a funeral procession passed on its way to the cemetery, the flower-laden coffin borne on the shoulders of four men, a few black-clad mourners following. Nobody seemed to see it, and the mourners hurried by, anachronistic and shame-faced.

Some of the complete costumes cost hundreds of pesos. It may mean that the young man works a year for his outfit; and then, as the local saying is, "en la calle,"—in the street. One doctor says that it is exhibitionism, and the other that they are all loco, which merely testifies to their diagnostic limitations. If

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01.

By Roberto Garibay.

Latin America Strides Toward Democracy

By Herbert L. Matthews

LATIN AMERICA is a breeding ground and a battleground for democracy. There is every reason to hope that out of the travail and the conflict a valid form of democracy will arise. This hope can be blasted by a third World War or the domination of Western Europe and its vital markets by the Russians, but a lot of other hopes will be blasted at the same time if those things happen.

There are twenty countries in Latin America, each one different from the others, each at different stages of political evolution. No one can toss off a generalization about them and expect it to be valid for all. No one can hold up a yardstick and apply it more or less solemnly to this or that country below the Rio Grande.

Within these limits, however, it can fairly be said that democracy is making significant headway among our Latin-America neighbors—despite heavy handicaps imposed by historical traditions and spectacular instances where forces opposed to democracy have managed to prevail. Here, then, is the broad picture of democracy as it stands today, the pluses and debits, and the challenge to us in North America to achieve a fuller understanding of the problems confronting the rest of our hemisphere.

By democracy we in the United States mean a system of government in which the people, who have universal suffrage, choose, control and change the men and women who conduct the affairs of the country,

a system in which checks and balances curb the powers of the executive and legislative branches, in which an independent judiciary applies the rule of law and in which civilians control the military. Most of all, Americans are instilled with a belief in the fundamental principles of democracy and an understanding of them.

To expect that degree of democracy in Latin-American countries—with their long traditions of strong Executives backed by the military, their high degree of illiteracy, their agricultural and mining economies, their extremes of wealth and poverty—is asking too much. The significant fact is that the goal of democracy, though imperfectly realized, is everywhere recognized as the accepted symbol of popular freedom.

* * *

In Latin America, even the worst dictators must talk democracy, promise it, make excuses for postponing it. President Juan D. Perón of Argentina echoes Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin in protesting that his type of regime is the real democracy.

"We claim as a fundamental truth of our doctrine," he said in a speech on March 11, "that true democracy is one in which the Government does what the public desires and defends a simple interest—that of the public."

This, of course, is no more like real democracy than the "democratic centralism" of the Communists, but it proves, at least, that if dictators like Perón cannot offer their people the real thing they have to present their own shoddy substitute.

The encouraging thing is that men like him and like Trujillo of the Dominican Republic or Somoza of Nicaragua fool nobody any more. They never could be considered as anything but dictators of an extreme type, but it is becoming wrong to think of them as typical. They are, in fact, representatives of a vanishing breed. Even the case of President Somoza has some bright tinges of the new times about it, for he is a benevolent dictator who has not created a totalitarian regime.

All Latin-American Governments now feel they must do something to reduce illiteracy and in so doing they are creating forces that will more likely lead toward democracy than toward totalitarianism. It stands to reason that Latin America will not have democracy in large measure until it has an enlightened citizenry, but when illiteracy runs from the 60 per cent of Brazil to the nearly 90 per cent of Bolivia, one can hardly expect the masses to be enlightened. The ruling classes then point to this ignorance and say the people are not ready for democracy. However, they are forced by the climate of our times to extend education. In country after country of Latin America one of the proudest boasts of the governing classes are the new schools.

In this, as in all fields, the record is uneven. Then dictatorship in Peru—making allowances for size—is doing far more for education than the relatively democratic Vargas regime in Brazil.

The right man in the right place can begin democracy just as surely as he can dictatorship. Galo Plaza Lasso, New York-born President of Ecuador, who has just visited the United States, has been proving that in the last three years. He has imposed democracy on a country that had twenty-seven Governments in twenty-five years and was as backward politically as any in the hemisphere. Naturally, that type of democracy is superficial until it penetrates deeply and stays fixed for years, but if Ecuadorians care enough for freedom of speech, press and meeting from police and military rule, they will insist on democracy and even fight for it.

* * *

Plaza has given them a precious gift and it is typical of Latin-American politics that it comes in paternalistic shape. After all, Spanish-American rule comes down through the viceroys of the empire and the generals of the revolutions. It is not illogical that in some cases, at least, democracy should come down from the ruling classes instead of up from the masses or the "proletariat." The problem in both cases is to make the democracy stick. The trouble with Aprismo in Peru and the Acción Democrática in Venezuela was precisely that they could not make their democracy (such as it was) stick. Yet at the worst, something is bound to remain and work in yeasty fashion to rise again through the crust of autocracy, militarism, nepotism and corruption.

It is something of a miracle that in spite of all handicaps, democracy is making headway, which is a comforting thought in these gloomy days when communism is taking such strides on the other side of the world. To see democracy flowering, to hear it talked about on every side to watch the well-tried doctrines of European liberalism being spread by immigrants—all this will give heart to the most confirmed pessimist.

The handicaps are great, but the factors are by no means all unfavorable. There isn't a country in Latin America that could not teach the United States up-to-date lessons in one of the fundamentals of democracy—the equality of race, color and class. Even Peru, a predominantly Indian country run by a small oligarchy of Spanish descent, is basically without such prejudices. In Brazil, Indian, Negro and European blood is so mixed that many families do not know their racial composition and on the whole they do not care. It is true that each country has its social élite of Spanish (or in the case of Brazil, Portuguese) descent, but this class is few in numbers and is being pushed aside or invaded by the newly rich with whom Latin America abounds.

There is an awareness and an alertness in the political atmosphere of Latin America that has grown considerably in recent years and will surely grow still stronger as time passes. The people are learning democracy in a hard school and most of them are still in the primary grades, but they are learning. There are failures and setbacks, but it is rare to find complete ignorance or complete tyranny. Urbanization, industrialization, immigration, the growth of the middle class, the penetration of foreign ideas through the radio and press, the increasing size and strength of trade unions, the example of the United States, are all factors that are breaking down the rigid authoritarian structures of the past.

* * *

When such gradual processes fail or are blocked, revolution sometimes comes along and bursts through the prison walls. Popular revolutions are usually an expression of democracy in Latin America. Mexicans are proud of the fact that they had their revolution in 1910, seven years before the Russians. The recent overthrow of the Arias Government in Panama was in part a democratic answer to a form of tyranny.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the army has always been a brake on democracy, an element of conservatism and reaction. A major feature of the struggle for political liberty lies in the effort to achieve a transfer from military to civil authority. That is one of the things to watch in these countries. Mexico, for instance, now has her first civilian President serving out a regular term of office and Miguel Alemán seems determined that power shall remain in civilian hands.

Inexperience with democratic institutions often leads to abuses in Latin America. Meetings turn into riots; a free press turns to license and slander, free speech into calls for violence. Then comes the reaction, which says: "The people cannot be trusted!"

It is hard to keep demagogic practices out of Latin-American politics. The climate of emotions, established traditions, the ignorance of the masses, are all calculated to lure political leaders into the conviction that the people must be bamboozled and the opposition cannot be trusted.

Last year Gen. Manuel Odría of Peru, who had seized power from the Aprista leader Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, was so enmeshed in the beliefs of his kind that he ran a completely crooked election although, according to all reports, he could have won just as surely by a fair and secret ballot.

It is still the rule in Latin America that the party in power can manage to win an election or impose its candidates. Democracy is weakest on the electoral side. In Colombia, the Conservatives who ruled from 1903 onward could only be defeated in 1930

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Patterns of an Old City

TOY BALLOONS

By Howard S. Phillips

SHE WAS aroused by the first desultory noises of the city coming to life—the intermittent rumbling of streetcars and busses commencing their daily route, the resounding footsteps and voices of early risers—gradually becoming dimly conscious amid these sounds of a remote yet distinctly clear peal of a clock bell, a peal which gathered an insistent significance and suddenly, like an imperative summons, made her completely awake. The thoughts which kept her wakeful through most of the night and which were interrupted by a final sleep of exhaustion, sharply came back to her mind. Here it is, she said to herself. This is the day.

She threw off the blanket and lowered her feet to the floor and paused irresolutely. Clasp- ing her head with her hands, her elbows resting over her knees, she sat on the edge of the bed peering through the murk. She heard Larry's even, peaceful breathing and discerned his round little face sunk in the pillow and the hand cupped in a little fist at the cheek. He does not know, she thought. He does not sense it. He is too small. He is yet too young to preserve a remembrance of this day when he grows up. It will be erased from his memory. He will forget Mexico, his faltering Spanish talk, this room, which has been our home—his home from birth—he will forget all these things as he grows up. This much of his life will be erased from his memory.

And once again the concern over her own uncertain future, over the imponderable life she was about to begin, reduced itself to the one predominant concern over the future of her child, Larry, she thought. He has no say in this. I will take him back with me as one takes a suitcase, a piece of baggage. He has no volition in this, no responsibility, not any more than in the circumstance of his birth or his existence thus far. But have I myself? she asked herself. My mind is made up. This is the day. I have lived through months of wavering, struggling with indecision and fear, with an incapacity to see or think or act, and now my mind is made up. My immediate step is perfectly clear. To day means the end of futile waiting, of hopelessly postponing something which in the end I cannot escape. It means the admission of defeat, the return to reality.

But is this thing I have finally made up my mind to give up unreal? she asked herself restively. Am I indeed giving up unreality to resume a sane and rational existence? And what, in God's name, is reality? Isn't this room where I have lived almost five years, where I have known the only true happiness life has granted me, and where I have suffered the anguish of stark loneliness, of despair and abandon, and likewise the ease of serene resignation, of a peace and tranquillity that I have somehow wrested from this loneliness—isn't this the truest reality I have ever known? I have loved this room, and I have hated it, and now that I am about to leave it, it seems friendly and homelike. Sure, Larry is here. He has always been here with me. And even when I was unutterably unhappy I have not been actually lonely with him at my side. He is my only reality.

I should not be thinking about all these things now, she said to herself. Thinking about them only shows that even if my mind is made up I am still not quite certain, that I am yet trying to find some other escape, some other way out, seeking some pretext, some

loophole that may deter me. But I have thought enough—God, I have certainly thought enough—and this is the day. I am burning my bridges. There is no turning back now. I have burned my bridges when I ran away, and I am doing it again in returning.

She rose and paced to the cot near the wall and as she stood there looking at the child's tranquil face a deep calm possessed her, a serene comprehension that she no longer dreaded this day, that in having reached her decision she also found a new liberation. At least now she knew what she was going to do; now she was out of the morass. The road ahead was an unpredictable maze; her future was unknowable—how indeed could one fathom a future that would have to emerge from an irreparably shattered past?—but now at least she was making a beginning; she was not sitting still; she was going forward to meet whatever fate held in store. The words burning my bridges again passed through her mind.

She had packed most of her scant belongings the day before and the three suitcases rested in readiness in a corner of the room. She had gone to the American cemetery and left a bunch of gladioli on Jim's grave—vermilion red, the kind he liked—and stood there for a while clasping Larry's little hand in her own, stoically holding back her tears, stifling her grief, mustering at great effort to keep her knees from yielding, saying to herself over and over again, this is the last visit, but it is not a final goodbye. You are going back with me. Whatever life I will have, you will be in it. There cannot be a final goodbye.

Birds were chirping gaily in the trees and overhead puffy white clouds hung in a very blue sky and in some way at that moment the world did not seem to her a strange and alien place. She sensed then, as she did now, while pacing over the threadbare rug of the room, while peering at the familiar street through the broken Venetian blinds, that she had not been totally friendless and homeless in Mexico, that in leaving this room, this street, this land, she was not going away from nowhere, that she was indeed going away from somewhere into what might be nowhere.

In the tiny bathroom she doused herself under a cold shower, arranged her hair before the dresser mirror, and donned the grey woolen dress she had chosen for the journey. She then went into the equally tiny kitchen, lit the tractoline stove and busied herself preparing the coffee and oatmeal for their breakfast. They were due at the bus station at eleven thirty. They had lots of time. There were yet the final details of an inventory of the dishes, utensils and linen with doña Aurora, the portera, and of saying adiós to the Señor and Señora Contreras who lived across the hallway. I might take Larry out after breakfast, she thought, and have a final walk in the Alameda. With the prospect of six weary days sitting in a bus, the exercise would be good for us.

I suppose it will still be hot up there, she thought, and my grey dress might be too heavy. But it is still quite presentable, and the wide leather belt is all right. Too bad I have no hat. They still seem to be wearing them up there. Mother will notice it right away. I am sure. Well, I suppose I will seem to them like a shabby tramp, like a savage emerging from the wilds. No matter what I do, what attitude I may assume, and what reception we are accorded, mother will regard

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In: Drawing.

By Jose A. Rodriguez.

Fortress Monasteries

By Trent Elwood Sanford

ONE of the best examples of the very early fortress-type monasteries is in the little town of Huejotzingo in the state of Puebla. The main highway from Mexico City to Puebla passes through the town where, on one side the road, on market days (Thursdays and Saturdays), the tree-filled square is thronged with people buying and selling pottery, fruits, vegetables, and all of the myriad things which go to make up a Mexican market. The color of the displays contrasting with the white tent-like umbrellas, the luxuriant green of the huge trees, and the white summit of Ixtaccihuatl as a background make it one of the most colorful markets to be found in all Mexico. Most people do make a brief stop to see the market or bargain for a serape, quite oblivious of the fact that directly across the highway is one of the most venerable monuments of Mexico's architectural history and, incidentally, one of the finest old Gothic churches on the continent.

Begun by the Franciscans within a very few years after the first of the friars had arrived in Mexico, and

following closely on the heels of that religious center which was taking the place of Montezuma's zoo, the church and monastery of Huejotzingo, built under the direction of Fray Juan de Alameda, was completed some forty years later.

A broad flight of steps almost directly off the highway leads up to a three-arched gateway to the extensive atrium, in the corners of which are the pointed-roof stone shrines already mentioned. A hundred yards or so back from the gateway is the entrance to the church, which has a flat battlemented parapet and a comparatively simple entrance with a flat irregularly arched doorway, decidedly Moorish in character, and a round-arched window above, flanked by carved stone shields. The large, heavy, paneled doors are studded with iron spikes. The aisleless interior has splayed windows high up in the nave and a Gothic rib-vaulted ceiling which is one of the finest in Mexico.

To the right of the entrance to the church, two Romanesque arches, with carvings delightfully recalling the twelfth-century work in France and Spain,

lead to a porch and thence to the large patio surrounded by cloisters which also could well be of the twelfth century in Europe.

Cuernavaca, flower-filled and colorful capital of the state of Morelos, only some fifty miles south of Mexico City, and now the popular country seat of the government official and the business executive, had a special appeal for Cortés more than four hundred years ago. It was there that he built his winter palace, and there that Fray Toribio de Benavente in 1529 established, at Cortés's request, a Franciscan monastery, the church of which in 1891 was raised to the rank of cathedral. The building is easily distinguishable as of the so-called "Early Franciscan" style by its massiveness and severity and its crenellated parapet. The graceful, tall tower is a later addition, erected in 1721. The interior, which is unusually long for a Mexican church, has a high, barrel-vaulted ceiling. At right angles to the entrance of the church is an arched open, or "Indian," chapel; while adjacent to one entrance of the atrium, in the northwest corner, is the Chapel of the Tercer Orden de San Francisco, of a later period, built sometime during the seventeenth century. It has a rather elaborate though crudely designed, facade of very evident Indian workmanship. Of curious interest is the way in which the ornament of the facade is carried into the base of the tower. A notable feature of this chapel is the half dome on the side facing the cathedral.

At Tepeaca, about twenty miles beyond Puebla, and one of the very earliest of the Spanish settlements in Mexico, is another of the early Franciscan fortress monasteries (built 1530) with an exceptionally fine, vaulted ceiling in the church. In the same town there is also a sixteenth-century octagonal tower of decidedly Moorish ancestry.

Facing the tourist unkempt main plaza at Xochimilco, where all tourists go to take a boat ride among the "floating gardens" which no longer float, is an old Franciscan church and monastery dedicated to San Bernardino, favorite saint of the local Indians. It stands at the end of a stone-paved walk, reached through a single-arched gateway. Built 1543-1551, it has the familiar battlement and, of curious interest, a great flying buttress resting against the belltower. The bare facade of the church has an entrance which is rather classical in part of its treatment, with simple-arched opening and huge paneled door flanked by a single column on either side; but above the entablature Indian fruit motifs frame a square opening crowned by a winged cherub. The aisleless interior has a great single barrel-vault.

Cholula will be remembered as one of the holy cities first of the Toltecs, then of the Aztecs, where is located the largest of all the pyramids and where took place that terrible massacre of the Indians by Cortés and his men. Cortés claimed to have counted four hundred towers in the city. As it was occupied by the Spaniards and remained for some time one of their chief centers of population, and as the Indian temples were torn down, one by one, a Christian church is said to have been built to replace each of the pagan temples. Thus it is commonly said that there is a church for every day in the year. From the top of the great pyramid, which is reached by a steep and winding roadway of stone ending in several flights of steps (and where there is a later, Paroque church), one can look out over the fertile valley and in all directions see the towers and domes of churches.

By far the finest of the churches to be seen from atop the pyramid is the great Gothic church of San Gabriel, begun by the Franciscans in 1549 and completed three years later. Its great buttressed nave and arse stand out prominently among the lesser churches. Facing the market place below, it stands well back

of a rather ornate gateway of two arches which leads into the atrium. The Plateresque entrance, with massive doors heavy with iron bosses, and with a circular window above, leads into an unusually large single nave with exceptionally fine rib-vaulting. Adjoining the church is the capilla Real with many domes supported by a forest of columns. There are 64 of these columns, forming seven aisles, with a dome over each bay thus formed, hence nearly fifty domes! Some of the columns are round and some are octagonal; and from them round arches spring, forming pendentives to support the domes. Originally built in the sixteenth century for "overflow" purposes, and undoubtedly inspired by the great Mosque of Cordova in Spain, the building collapsed shortly after it was completed and was rebuilt in the seventeenth century.

At Tula, another famous city of the Toltecs, in what is now the state of Hidalgo, is a walled monastery begun by Fray Antonio de San Juan in 1550. An inscription on the wall states that it was completed in 1553, a short time for the construction of such a fortress church and monastery under the conditions existing during that period and in an especially hostile section of the country. San Jerónimo Atotonilco, in the same state, has a severe and rather massive Plateresque entrance with a rare and unusually beautiful rose window of Gothic tracery above. The great round arches of the open chapel are still standing, in good conditions.

A number of other early Franciscan churches and monasteries are to be found, particularly east of Mexico City, in the region around Puebla. The one at Tecamacaleco, just off the highway from Puebla to Orizaba, is typical. It rather dominates the small city, facing a large, level, enclosed yard on the side of a high hill, and can be reached, discreetly, only on foot for the last couple of blocks. Its battlements betoken its age and the ruined arches of a one-time monastery, its use. Its simple, square, single tower looks silently out over the deserted atrium; and its doorway, planted against a perfectly plain wall, is reminiscent of the Moorish arch at Huejotzingo. As for its interior I cannot say; I could find no one to let me in.

Following the first Franciscan friars, sometimes spoken of as the Twelve Apostles of Mexico, the next group to arrive in the New World were twelve Dominicans in 1526. Misfortune seems to have awaited them however, as five of their number died within a few days after their arrival. Discouraged, four more returned to Spain, leaving only three in Mexico. Although they were followed by other groups, the Dominicans did not start on the work of establishing missions as rapidly as had the Franciscans.

In the meantime the Augustinians had begun to arrive. Seven landed in 1533; and, within six years, there were between thirty and forty Augustinian friars undertaking the missionary work of that order.

As in the case of the Franciscans, it was necessary for the friar to be preacher, and builder, all in one. In addition to converting the Indians to Christianity, preaching to them, and teaching their children, his time was occupied in planning and supervising the construction of the churches and monasteries and managing the vast numbers of Indian craftsmen and laborers employed on the work. Every monastery had its primary school; and in order for the friar to teach about a thousand children it was necessary for him to follow the plan originally adopted by the pioneer Franciscan, Pedro de Gante, in training the brightest pupils to aid in teaching the others.

Thus the friar divided his time between the education of the children and the supervision and the conversion of the adults. The former were not allowed any communication with their parents, but were gathered in low halls adjoining their dormitories be-

kind the church, where they were given instruction in reading, writing, singing, and religion. From the hundreds so taught, a dozen or more would be selected, given intensive training, and then were either retained as assistants or sent out as missionaries. The teaching was directed chiefly at the children, who were not yet steeped in pagan beliefs, and who, the friars felt, could be counted upon to bring in their parents. The method was successful, and it was the great number of Indians who came to attend mass that brought about the open chapel.

In addition to the elementary studies, the friars taught the Indians European techniques in the various crafts—masonry, carpentry, ceramics, weaving, and dyeing. And in addition to baptizing, confirming, marrying, and saying masses, they settled disputes among their parishioners, attended the sick, punished the wayward, comforted the dying, and buried the dead.

When the friar was not thus occupied, he was kept busy supervising the Indian laborers and craftsmen at work on the monastery buildings which were going up as the teaching progressed in temporary structures. That a great deal of forced Indian labor was used there can be no doubt; and it was necessary for the friar to maintain the strictest discipline. It was the sincere devotion of the first of these friars, however, that was responsible for the faith and trustfulness of the Indians, and that made possible the early accomplishments. Though later generations of priests seemed to have forgotten the humility and the genuine zeal for conversion on the part of their predecessors in favor of material gains for themselves, it was the humility and self-sacrifice of the pioneer missionaries in their fight against the system of slavery originated by Columbus and adopted by Cortés, and in their sympathetic though strict handling of the natives that won the Indians' loyalty, once their hostility had been overcome. The Dominican Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, especially, devoted all his energy to demanding recognition and consideration of the rights of the Indians. The grand simplicity of the earlier structures compared with the ornate elaboration of the churches of later generations reflect this energetic zeal, tempered with earnest desire for conversion. Based on medieval tradition, the churches were large, and even in those early days criticism was directed at their cost and their great numbers; but the results were amazing, and the extensive influence of the friars during those first hundred years, helped along by the keen competition among the orders, laid the foundations for whatever successes the Church achieved (and later abused) in Mexico.

The architecture of the Augustinians differed little from that of the early Franciscans; the difference is chiefly discernible in a greater amount of decoration at the entrance to the church. The front of the church is apt to have a slightly sloping pediment rather than the horizontal termination of the Franciscan churches; but it still has the battlements. Decoration on the interior is more profuse; but structurally the Augustinians followed the same trend, since, except for the slight head start of the Franciscans (about one decade), they were contemporaneous.

Most notable and among the best preserved of the earliest Augustinian monasteries are two which are within easy reach of Mexico City, Acolman and Acotlan.

The monastery of San Agustín Acolman is not far to the northeast, and is usually included in a visit to the archaeological site of San Juan Teotihuacán. Like that of its early Toltec predecessor, its name is a combination of Spanish and Aztec, the latter part of the name meaning "surrounded by water." It was very aptly named since for many years after its abandonment it was subjected to floods which deposited layers

of silt to a depth of several feet, burying the lower part of the structure. It was not until quite recently that it was excavated and repaired by the National Department of Colonial Monuments. The "high-water mark" of the deposit is easily discernible on the front and throughout the interior of the church.

Until a very few years ago Acolman was reached by a narrow side road leading off the washboard gravel highway which led from Venta de Carpio, a short distance north of Mexico City, to Teotihuacán. Now a new paved road leads directly past the old monastery on its way to the pyramids, destroying some of the picturesque aloofness of the old fortress-like ecclesiastical center, but making it more readily accessible.

The church of San Agustín Acolman ranks with that of Huejotzingo as one of the two finest Gothic churches in Mexico; and it has a vaulted ceiling comparable to that of the old Franciscan church on the Puebla highway. The church and monastery were begun by Augustinian friars in 1539 and completed in 1560, during the term of the second viceroy, Luis de Velasco.

It is an especially fine example of massive Gothic structure combined with features of that transitional style which is a fusion of the Gothic with Moorish flavoring and the beginnings of the Renaissance, known as Plateresque.

If one visits Teotihuacán first and returns to Acolman, approaching it by way of the crumbling but still picturesque two-arched side gateway to the monastery grounds, the side of the church looms up ahead, a massive, bare expanse of stone, with huge buttresses the full height of the building and a still larger buttress on the front corner, with a stone battlement along the coping which hides the arched roof.

The front of the church is, in general, severe, with a simple, three-arched belfry on the center interrupting the battlement, and with ornament concentrated at an entrance doorway and window above of especially fine Plateresque character. The Plateresque entrance is singularly free from evidences of Indian influence in design, but with probable Indian craftsmanship closely directed by a Spanish master sculptor. The contrast of the richly carved portal with the severely plain front—that fruit of Spanish austerity and Moorish and Italian delicacy—was never better achieved in Spain, and is the more pronounced because of the fortress-like character of the structure.

The round-arched doorway is flanked by two garlanded columns on either side, the inner ones of which support nude Indians carrying baskets on their heads. Between each pair of columns is a niche containing a figure of a saint. The figure on the left is San Pedro; on the right is San Pablo. On the exterior archivolts are carved different kinds of fruits—apples, pears, and pomegranates—offerings of the Indians to the saints; while the interior archivolt is decorated with reliefs of cherubim alternating fruits. On the intrados are carved thirteen plates bearing all kinds of viands—fish, birds, and vegetables—probably an allusion to the Last Supper. In the spandrels of the arch is depicted the Annunciation; while the frieze above contains a continuous band of horses, no doubt a fascinating and amusing subject to the Indian craftsmen who had known of the horse but a few years. Resting on the cornice over the doorway is a series of niches containing tiny figures of musicians. On either side of the carved frame of the smaller opening above the main entrance is a shield, with the device of Castile at the left and that of Acolman at the right. The pedestals upon which the columns stand and the lower parts of the columns were, for years, submerged in silt which settled around the whole structure.

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Photograph.

By Mary Saint Albans.

Green Gold in Yucatán

By Robert Spiers Benjamin

FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS, since Yucatán's greedy jungles swallowed the Mayan empire, civilization had held only a thin coastal strip of that wildest area of Mexico. Explorers sometimes penetrated to a lost city. Chicle hunters on yearly forays brought out raw materials to appease the great American gum chewer. Loggers nibbled at the seaward fringes of the forests. But Yucatán's vast green body still stood virtually untouched between the Gulf and Caribbean, a triumph of nature over man.

When young Alfredo Medina set out fifteen years ago to tame the interior of Yucatán, even his best friends called him *El Loco*—"the crazy one." They all felt sorry for Al. The son of a wealthy henequen planter, he had won an engineering degree at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, then returned to Mérida, Yucatán's capital, to build houses and roads. He was doing nicely when the henequen estates were expropriated in 1935 and cut into communal

farms for the workers. The Medina fortune vanished, building activity in Mérida ceased, and his own company soon collapsed. All he had left was a few pesos and an idea.

While his friends clucked sympathetically, Alfredo took a train to the end of a dispirited railroad that skirts the jungle for 120 miles. Then, with a guide, he disappeared into the matted brush. Walked into a Mérida bank, offering to pay royalties for the rights to cut a magnificent stand of Spanish cedar he had found. The bankers reviewed a sad story: how the concession had come to them when an earlier logging operator had lost a three-year-struggle with the jungle. "I know," Alfredo smiled stubbornly.

Then they offered to sell the tract for 26,300 pesos (then about \$6,500). "I don't have 260 pesos," Alfredo admitted. Taking a what-can-we-lose attitude, the bank signed the royalty deal. Alfredo went back to the jungle.

Recently a party of U.S. furniture manufacturers toured Yucatán by air as guests of Alfredo Medina,

They flew over a tropical lumbering empire whose three and a half million acres and five hundred miles of roads channeled shiploads of cedar and rich mahogany through two ports to foreign markets. Where Medina had cut his first timber they saw a model town around huge new plants producing tons of plywood, school desks, knock-down furniture, and prefabricated houses for Mexico's growing cities. Southward two hundred miles, in the very heart of the jungle, they found another modern town growing. They watched enchanted as El Loco—he prizes that name now—soaring over Yucatán in his private DC-3, picked up the radiophone to talk with his officers and remote outpost camps.

Medina has done it by defying traditions. "The most valuable thing I learned at Rensselaer was to get my hands dirty," he says, making a point more profound than it sounds. It was traditional for upper-class young men, even engineers, to stand aloof from their workmen and manual labor. But when he went back to his first timber concession, with a small loan and a few laborers, he substituted "We'll do this" for "You do this." Swinging a machete, he led the gang that hacked out a forty-mile trail to the primitive harbor of El Cuyo. Then for months he slept in a hammock and helped saw the giant cedars that at first were towed to the Gulf by mules.

His second innovation was even more revolutionary. Yucatán's fly-by-night chicle and logging camps were historically a refuge for Mexico's toughest elements. Drifters, habitual drunks, and men fleeing the law could be hired for scant wages. They expected—and usually got—bad food and miserable living conditions. In return they shirked their jobs, while dissipation and high disease rates further reduced productivity.

Medina picked native Yucatecan family men, and, although he was working on a limited loan, astounded them by offering premium wages. "For a while," he recalls, "they made more than I did." But these were men to whom he could impart his dream of the future. In camp at night he would paint glowing word-pictures of "what we can do." This included permanent homes for the workers' families, mounting wage scales, and expanding opportunities for the ambitious.

This new approach paid off in loyalty and cooperation. In a few months he was able to clear a crude landing strip, hire a freight plane, and fly a light-weight power mill, piece by piece, into the camp which he christened Colonia Yucatán. Then, instead of logs,

lumber went down the trail to El Cuyo and returns mounted on each load. In the second year he paid the bank forty thousand pesos in royalties. After four years he bought the concession for a million pesos instead of the original 26,000 the bank had asked for. But the deal was still a good one.

For a fast haul to the port he devised a two-foot-wide railway over which a rubber-tired tractor, its wheels outside the rails, could pull fifteen lumber-laden flat cars, doing the work of a fleet of trucks. The original lumber mill grew into a huge plant to which were soon added a plywood factory, with its battery of electric planes and giant drying kilns, and furniture workshops.

Colonia Yucatán today houses most of Medina's three thousand workers and their families. Each small home, complete with electricity and running water, is rent free, but only so long as the tenant paints it yearly and keeps his pigs and chickens securely fenced in.

When the people wanted a movie, Medina built it, but insisted that a workers' committee operate it at a profit. Recently the committee began work on a swimming pool in the main plaza, financed by the theater's earnings. Another move that helped to make Colonia Yucatán a contented community was the elimination of the company-owned store, a device still often used to siphon back the workers' wages through high prices and shady bookkeeping. Medina owns the markets, barbershop, bakery, and other such buildings, but rents them as concessions. His office keeps a close check to see that prices permit the tradesmen only modest profits; on the other hand, he guarantees them against losses.

A modern hospital and strict sanitary code successfully combat the jungle health problems, and attendance at the model, company-built school is enforced by Medina's orders. Moreover, the town is practically crime free, a record that goes back to the first instance of thievery disclosed in the original crude camp. When the culprit, who had stolen another's clothes, was identified, Medina had his foremen pay him off, give him food and start him hiking the trail to the railhead at Tzimin, three days away. That jungle law has been observed, by popular acclaim, ever since.

But the most meaningful innovation is the peninsula's highest wage scale. Common labor now gets 20 pesos a day, while husky bulldozer operators and

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Station by a Wood

By Marjorie Somers Scheuer

HALF daylight and half darkness now,
The long train stops where willow bough
Dips tassels in a stream.

The sky, the woods merge into one;
An orchid cloud enfolds the sun;
The leaves and water dream.

Voices are still; a hush pervades
The car as twilight slowly fades,
And nothing real exists.

The train takes on the quietude
Of leafy water, drowsy wood,
And softly rising mists.

Music By Chávez

By Herbert Weinstock

WHEN I FIRST VISITED MEXICO CITY in 1933, the ornate Palace of Fine Arts was not yet completed. At that time the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico gave its concerts in the shabby, unsuitable Hidalgo Theater on Calle Regina. An extraordinary season of four concerts was scheduled for late May and early June, and several times Carlos Chávez invited me to the dank, empty Hidalgo to hear the orchestra rehearse. Both he and the late Silvestre Revueltas, then assistant director of the orchestra, conducted at the sessions.

Revueltas, a musician of innate but largely undisciplined talent, took over for Debussy's Ibéria and Jacques Ibert's Escales. He transmitted a warm, unstable personality, and his hour or so of labor over Debussy and Ibert revealed a man struggling to impose order on an imperfect group of instrumentalists. He was far from successful. The men in the orchestra gave him a reasonable modicum of cooperation, and it was evident that they really liked him personally. But I surmised that a concert conducted by Revueltas would nevertheless offer little beyond the unsteady quality to be expected of a five-year-old orchestra suffering from chronic budgetary anemia and a dearth of first-rate players.

After the Debussy and Ibert, Carlos Chávez was to rehearse the suite from Falla's *El Amor Brujo* and Ravel's *Bolero*. Neatly dressed in informal gray slacks and a sweater, he strode to the podium, brusquely indicated where he would begin in the first score, and started to conduct. At once the atmosphere changed radically, as if we had all moved to another theater with a new orchestra.

The easy, slack camaraderie between Revueltas and the men was gone. In its place appeared the hard, clear impression left by Chávez imposing his will, his musical conceptions, through a brilliant mastery of conducting technique. It was impossible to be sure that the members of the orchestra really liked Chávez—traditionally, orchestra men do not warm up to conductors of an imperious nature—but they watched him intently. More important, they responded to his dominance with performances superior in every telling detail.

"Ojo!" "Ojo!" Chávez shouted again and again as he tirelessly went over and over a passage that failed to satisfy him. The gradual improvement in the playing of each such musical fragment was plainly evident. I thought I detected resentment in some of the players as their conductor lectured them on how to play, cajoled, shook his head in annoyance as though doubtful of success, flipped back the pages of the score—and began again. But his insistence was rewarded with results, which was all that interested him. Whether or not his men were able to feel toward him the warmth that Revueltas evoked, they respected his effectiveness. They played for Chávez with a clarity, a force, and a concentration that the seemingly more friendly Revueltas did not command.

The actual concert in the Hidalgo on May 26, 1933, a benefit for the Mexican Red Cross and the Spanish Beneficencia, reflected the performances at rehearsal. Under Revueltas the Debussy and Ibert sounded well enough, but quite without distinction. Under Chávez the Falla and Ravel became vivid and vital, and the audience responded accordingly.

What I thus learned about this Mexican composer-conductor remains for me, after seventeen years, indicative of the character of the man. To attain his high standard of quality he is willing to sacrifice almost anything else, including friendships, which are as necessary to him as to most of us. An idealist and a perfectionist, he will tyrannize over himself as many other people as need be to get the high-quality results he demands. This unyielding refusal to settle for second-best or for any effect but the one he has foreseen has won Chávez enemies both among the slipshod and easy-going and among those whose ideas of quality honestly differ from his. But the fact remains that he continues to get results.

Chávez' enemies charge that for more than two decades he, as a conductor, stood so squarely in the Mexican sun that he deliberately cast a shadow on others. He has often been accused of jealousy, of wanting to be Mexico's only conductor. The record refutes this charge: During his twenty-one-year directorship of the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, it was conducted by such Mexicans as Silvestre Revueltas for seven seasons, Eduardo Hernández Moncada for five, and José Pablo Moncayo for five. Among foreign guest conductors who accepted Chávez' invitation to appear were men of such stature as Ernest Ansermet, Sir Thomas Beecham, Eugene Goossens, Paul Hindemith, Otto Klemperer, Darius Milhaud, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Pierre Monteux, Leopold Stokowski, and Igor Stravinsky. This is scarcely the picture of a conductor selfishly afraid of sharing his orchestra or the limelight.

For a long time, another source of bitterness against Chávez was his insistence on playing twentieth-century music of every sort from Sibelius and Strauss to Stravinsky, from Copland and Bartók to Henry Cowell. He played music by Mexicans—works by young Blas Galindo, Manuel M. Ponce, Silvestre Revueltas (whom mischievous individuals tried vainly to set up as a rival to Chávez), Luis Sandi, and himself, among many others. He said and wrote again and again quite simply that a symphony orchestra cannot be a museum, that to fulfill its proper social function it must perform not only the great music of the past, but also the best works, however difficult, of the present, together with the work of younger men not yet full masters. He did not heed the criticism that ordered him to play only familiar or restful music. He insisted that the composers of our time continue to have a place on his programs.

I first met Carlos Chávez in his Mexico City office early that spring of 1933. He had recently resigned as director of the National Conservatory of Music and had just accepted the post of chief of the Department of Fine Arts in the Public Education Secretariat. From the first, the vigorous, dynamic musician made a forceful impression on me. Not quite thirty-four, he was of slightly more than medium height and moved with swift, characteristic decisiveness. His handsome head was distinguished by a strong, firmly set jaw, restless, penetrating eyes, and a mass of heavy black hair, now splashed with gray, that was—and still is—dramatically unruly. He is always fantastically busy, apparently driven by the brevity of time and his demands upon it. Nonetheless he greeted me warmly and with unhurried poise when I called to present a letter of introduction. I knew almost at once that I

should like to have him as a friend, both as a man and as a musician. It took Chávez somewhat longer to assess my beliefs and attitudes and offer me his friendship.

In the years since that enchanting Mexican spring, I have passed many stimulating hours with Chávez in Mexico, New York (really his second home), Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington. I have heard him rehearse and conduct in all those places. Besides watching him on the podium before his own orchestra—which he led from its formation in July 1928 until its dissolution twenty years later—and seven orchestras in the United States, I have seen him composing, trying out at the piano what he had composed, discussing large and small plans of a dozen sorts, hiring soloists, and managing the complex network of operations implied by his present position as director of the government's Institute of Fine Arts. Very often, too, I have joined him ostensibly to relax. But never have I seen Carlos Chávez when he was not, in one way or another, living intensely. He continually keeps his faculties mobilized, all his senses entirely aware.

After the first rehearsal I attended in the Hidalgo Theater in 1933, I went up on the stage to talk with Chávez. The fresh-looking, neatly but flamboyantly dressed man I had spoken to earlier was slumped down on a tall stool. Despite the pervading chill in the air, his slacks, sweater, and shirt were crumpled and sopping wet with perspiration. His rebellious hair was matted and askew. Mopping face and neck, he looked understandably weary. I supposed he would go home to rest. But, grasping my arm, he quickly started up toward his dressing-room. "Now," he said, "let us go to find a very good meal." And we did. Chávez takes it for granted that food, too, must have quality, and he knows what tourists often fail to learn, that Mexico City is a gourmet's paradise.

Later that season I heard Chávez rehearse and then conduct a concert made up of César Franck's *D-minor Symphony*, the *Second Suite* from Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*, and the *Ninth Symphony* of Beethoven, the last with a chorus beautifully trained by Luis Sandi. Despite the contemporary texture of Chávez' own compositions and programs, he has a special and enduring feeling for Beethoven. His performance of the Ninth would have done credit to any of the far richer and better-manned orchestras of the United States. From others I had learned of the rather haphazard group of instrumentalists that Chávez had taken over in 1928 as the orchestra of the Mexico City musicians' union and had slowly transformed into the *Symphony Orchestra of Mexico*. Five years is not much time for the formation of a major orchestra. To mold from such disparate elements an organization capable of setting forth Beethoven's Ninth so justly was a miracle of purposefulness and energy. On the spot I conceived for Chávez a respectful admiration that has never diminished.

On a typical day I once saw Chávez carry out the following schedule. At 8:30 a.m. in his studio at home he rehearsed and accompanied a young singer who was going to present a group of his songs. Then he rushed to the Palace of Fine Arts to spend about an hour in the paper work of administrative detail. Next he rehearsed the orchestra for nearly two hours. Luncheon in a restaurant (a good restaurant, as always) was leisurely but not long. Afterward several hours were spent walking about the new galleries in the Palace of Fine Arts trailed by assistants, turnkeys, elevator men, carpenters, and secretaries, making certain that his plans were being properly carried through. The big Diego Rivera retrospective exhibition was about to be hung, and Chávez had an eye for each detail of its presentation. Next more paper work. Then a

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Pencil Drawing.

By Roberto Block.



"Plaza, Oaxaca." Lithograph.

By Lewis Rubenstein

Lewis Rubenstein

By Guillermo Rivas

THROUGH many years, and especially since the advent of the modern mural era, Mexico's pictorial highways and byways have been trod by countless American painters in pursuit of afflatus. And though for some of these painters Mexico has been a field of rich discovery, of delving and guidance, for most it has served only as a source of novel and exotic themes for a purely external depiction.

The reason of it is quite obvious. One can set up an easel almost anywhere in Mexico and paint an interesting picture. But Mexico's intrinsic substance is too elusive for the average foreign painter, and even if he has the necessary curiosity his vision is seldom sufficiently keen to enable him to perceive this substance and convincingly transcribe it. What, in other

words, he usually sees and narrates has the depth and dimensions of the impressions gathered by the average tourist.

Indeed, I can recall only a counted few American painters whose perception has reached below the alluring pictorial surface, who have been able to see and feel and to bring out in their work the underlying essence and significance of our landscape, our flora and fauna. And I am inclined to believe that Lewis Rubenstein, who has been painting in Mexico during the brief period of several months, justly belongs among these counted few.

Lewis Rubenstein seems to possess the rare faculty for intuitive rapport, for sharp and immediate impact with his surroundings, though they may be totally



"Good Friday, Guanajuato," Lithograph.

By Lewis Rubenstein

removed from the usual. He seems to be endowed with an innate cosmopolitanism which enables him to feel aesthetically at home in a remote and foreign midst. Thus, remaining impervious to the merely picturesque, he was not bewildered by the subtle and complex substance of Mexican reality. He approached it directly and without vacillation, and he found in it precisely what he sought.

He realized his purpose because at the outset it was clearly formulated in his mind, because he approached the Mexican scene with a definite viewpoint; because he perceived as its salient characteristic the integral and harmonious fusion of its basic vital elements—of the man, his soil, and his social environment. And being guided by this viewpoint, he has brought out in his depiction of the Mexican scene, beyond his visual enjoyment, something of the human values common not only to Mexico but to all mankind.

In the projection of almost any casual wayside theme this painter achieves what may be termed as a synthesis of a much greater theme; such as in the painting "La Yunta," where the panorama of rural Mexico is defined in a single revealing image. The objective excellence of this painting is enhanced by its profound and comprehensive implication. Its con-

figuration palpably denotes a harmonious fusion. The men behind the plows, the oxen, the furrowed ground and the air itself are fused in terms of solid plastic organization into an integral whole. Again a similar purpose has been successfully achieved in the austere geometrical contours of "The Weaver." Therein the artist has apparently felt that the loom is a part of the man—that the function and existence of the one is inseparable from the other—and he sought to define this living unity in the linear and spacial structure of the painting.

In his lithographs, beyond the expressive topical representation, there is likewise the same element of universal significance. Life in the market plaza—the focal point of rural community life—is not defined in crowds, in bustle and hubbub, but in the serene and placid atmosphere surrounding the family group. The stock in trade is very small and the day's return may not amount to more than a peso or two; but there is the baby in the mother's arms and the guitar resting at her side. The realism of the objective theme is so to speak, of secondary purport, whereas the idea defined by this theme is transcendent. And in this, as in his other Mexican lithographs, the idea is always sound—it always has the basic element of truth.

"Cocks," Lithograph.

By Lewis Rubenstein



* * *

Lewis Rubinstein began to paint by natural inclination in his childhood and obtained his formal training in fine arts at the Harvard University. After graduating he was granted a traveling fellowship by this university and spent two years completing his studies in Europe, devoting most of his time to the study of mural art in Italy.

Upon his return to the United States he was commissioned to execute murals in the Fogg Museum and the Busch-Reisinger Museum of the Harvard University, and subsequently at the Detroit Metal Exposition and in the Fine Arts Section of the Treasury Department in Washington, D. C. He served in the U. S. Navy during the war as ship camouflage officer, and since then has painted a large mural at the Buffalo, N. Y. Jewish Community Center. At present he is teaching painting at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

His work has been exhibited in recent years at the Whitney Museum, the National Academy, and the Norllyst Gallery in New York City; at the Albright Gallery, in Buffalo, N. Y.; at the Addison Gallery, in Andover, Mass.; at the Albany Institute, Albany, N. Y., and at the Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

* * *

His journey to Mexico was prompted by a desire aroused in 1940, when he worked as assistant to José Clemente Orozco in the painting of various portable murals at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The purpose of this journey, he told me in answer to my question, was to find the valid and the real in the Mexican scene, that would be conducive to a valid and real creative experience. The common chord to which he has responded has been the reaffirmation of human realism—that is to say, a return to human life as the basic value of art. This, he said, may sound like a truism, but it actually states the case. For in the non-objective and dehumanized era prevalent to-day in the world of art he has felt the need of reaffirming human values—the need of getting back to earth.

The work he has performed during his journey amply demonstrates that he has achieved such reaffirmation.

"La Yunta," Oil.

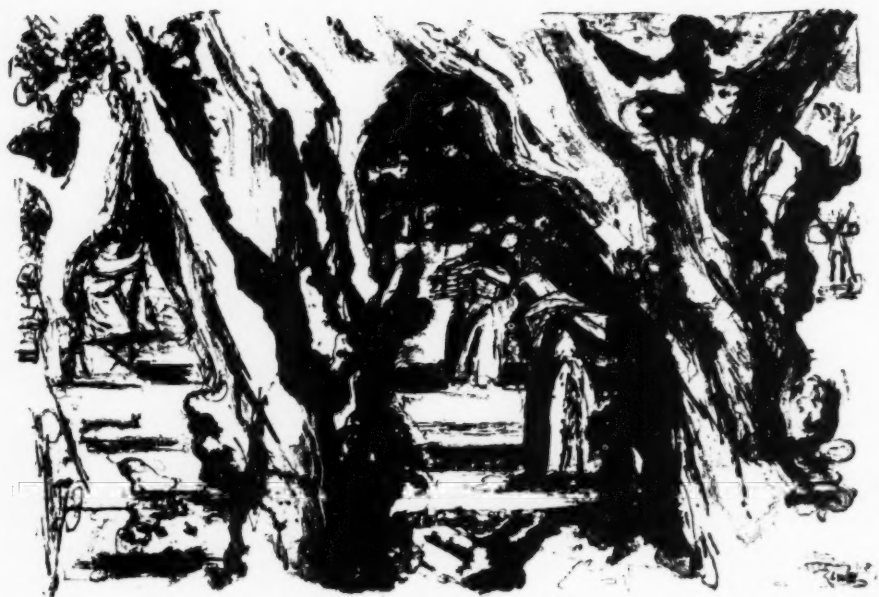


By Lewis Rubinstein



"Weaver, Oaxaca," Vinylite.

By Lewis Rubinstein



"Tree Arch, Tepestian." Lithograph.

By Lewis Rubenstein



"Family." Lithograph.

By Lewis Rubenstein

Un Poco de Todo

BATTLES LONG AGO

JUST a century ago an English author began what was to become a very famous book with words that evoke a sigh today. "It is an honorable characteristic of the spirit of this age," he wrote, "that projects of violence and warfare are regarded among civilized states with gradually increasing aversion." The book was "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," by Edward Shepherd Creasy, that stirring panorama of the great moments in history from Marathon to Waterloo when the fate of the world on a particular day hung on the issue of one battle. "Had Persia beaten Athens at Marathon (B. C. 490) she could have found no obstacle to prevent Darius, the chosen servant of Ormuzd, from advancing his sway over all the known races of mankind... Alexander's victory at Arbela (B. C. 331) not only overthrew an Oriental dynasty but established European rulers in its stead... The Christian Visigoths of King Theodoric fought and triumphed at Chalons (A. D. 451) side by side with the legions of Aetius. Their joint victory over the Hunnish host not only rescued for a time from destruction the old age of Rome but preserved for centuries of power and glory the Germanic element in the civilization of modern Europe."

And so it went—Tours in 732, where Charles Martel beat the Saracens and "gave a decisive check to the career of Arab conquest in Western Europe"; Hastings in 1066, of which we need no reminder but which is always so sad and thrilling to read about; Joan of Arc's victory, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Marlborough, Peter the Great and on down to Wellington and Napoleon. Our own victory over Creasy's countrymen at Saratoga in 1777 wins an honored place, for it turned the tide of war and brought France and Spain on our side.

And what shall we think today of Poltava, where Peter the Great defeated Charles XII of Sweden in 1709 and started the Slavs on the road of conquest whose end we do not yet see? Even in 1851 Creasy could write: "It may be doubted whether a Cabinet council often takes place now in our Foreign Office without Russia being uppermost in every English statesman's thoughts." Creasy a century ago gave us the terrible possibility that runs through all minds today, "that the narrative of Slavonic ascendancy is the remaining page that will conclude the history of the world."

To be sure, he also believed that "the conquests of China and Japan by the fleets and armies of the United States are events which many now living are likely to witness." In a way, had he been able to live miraculously until 1945 he would have seen something of the sort, but not in the sense that he envisaged it, not an imperialistic conquest. Which brings us to wonder what "decisive battles" we would add now to the fifteen that Creasy chose? Some have said Gettysburg in our Civil War, for it saved the Union. Then there were the Marne and Verdun in the First World War. Perhaps we could add El Alemein and Stalingrad from the late war. Certainly, the naval Battle of the Midway Islands would earn its place.

The glory and the thrill of all these great battles can never fade, however much we deplore the horrors and cruelty of war. A century from now our descendants will read as emotionally as we do how the Athenian phalanx stood firm on the field at Marathon, how

that Norman arrow shot high in the air came down and pierced Earl Harold's eye, how the thin red lines of the British squares took the shock of the Old Guard at Waterloo. Those readers in 2051 will not look back on our days and sigh in envy, as we do today, to read about the thirty-six years of peace that preceded 1851. Peace, it would seem, is but a truce between wars, and it may be that one of the "decisive battles" yet to be added to the list is some cataclysmic atomic struggle in which the world will be saved for democracy.

CORTISONE FROM MEXICO

The recent announcement made in New York that a new source for production of cortisone had been developed in Mexican yams calls attention, once more, to the advances that are steadily being made in man's war on disease. While embattled armies are fighting for our liberties in the deadly entirely unwelcome business of war, another army of devoted men and women is carrying on another great struggle on our behalf.

Their victories in recent years have been notable. After the turn of the century much attention was given to the prevention of communicable disease. New prophylactic methods were discovered and developed; in some cases, such as mosquito control, involving vast changes in community living. Some of the deadliest enemies of mankind were brought to bay.

More recently, while none of this work has been lost, there has been an increasing emphasis on dealing with some of the degenerative diseases that make humans miserable and that reduce the whole quality of living. Here again enormous strides have taken place. We have only to point to such things as insulin, the sulfa compounds or penicillin to illustrate how lives have been saved and how lives have been changed. We have just had, for example, the case of Hamilton Richardson, a young American boy who went to the fourth round in the singles at Wimbledon and the semi-final round in the doubles. He is a diabetic and he plays tennis on insulin. He had a distinguished predecessor on that score in Billy Talbert and in Bill Nicholson in baseball. The lives of those persons have been changed out of all recognition by advances in science.

Much has been said about "wonder drugs," but this great gain in living should not be allowed to be put into the field of mumbo-jumbo. The work that is being done on the adrenal and other hormones is solid, serious, scientific work. Its object is to make us better than we were and to defat some of our oldest enemies. We hail the victories in this struggle and look forward to others. They are the fruit of hours and days and years of painstaking labor on our behalf. We salute the heroes of the microscopes and the test tubes.

MONSTER TO ORDER

After working for three years, supported by a grant-in-aid of the American Cancer Society, Dr. Emil Witschi of Iowa City, Iowa, is able to produce at will such monstrosities as animals with two heads, extra limbs and also—and this is most important—animals with cancer. He simply retards the development of the eggs in the animals before fertilization. As a re-

Continued on page 62

Literary Appraisals

EL LABERINTO DE LA SOLEDAD, by Octavio Paz.
Mexico City, Editorial Cuadernos Americanos, 1950.
195 p.

PRESENT HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES in Europe have led to a revival of speculative thinking focussed on the feeling of solitude—rather unusual for that region. But in Spanish America solitude became the principal subject of reflection as soon as thought not dominated by spiritual considerations made its appearance.

If as Lord Bacon would have it, solitude, is most intense and the thinker most completely surrounded by it in "the great city," then one might say we find it chemically pure in the remote regions. And although this does not in any way imply a deprecatory opinion, we must recognize that in a sense all Spanish America has up to now been an out-of-the-way place.

This has its disadvantages, of course. For example, our geography has considerably retarded our communication with the world, resulting in an alarming historical provincialism. But there is at least one important compensation in the intellectual field: the American philosopher or poet (César Vallejo or Eduardo Mallea, for instance) usually sharply discerns what human solitude is, precisely because he can instinctively distinguish it from the simple physical isolation he knows so well.

Moreover, while Europe hardly listens to us, we Spanish Americans scarcely hear one another, either from country to country or within each one. The bond that joins us is very tenuous, and for that reason we become extremely conscious of it, as if we were forever afraid that it would suddenly be cut off, inflicting a savage isolation upon us.

So, essentially alone, the Spanish Americans consider others with rare tenderness; some kill their fellowmen with kindness; while others investigate them with the double passion of science and poetry. An example of the latter is "El Laberinto de la Soledad" (The Labyrinth of Solitude), a volume of related essays by the Mexican Octavio Paz, some of which were previously printed in the magazine "Cuadernos Americanos," whose publishers have brought out the book.

Mexico is a country that has suffered from invasions by foreign powers from the days of Hernán Cortés down to General Pershing, and, just as much, from no less terrible domestic uprisings. In the hearts of nearly all Mexicans there is a keen yearning for the past grandeur of pre-Columbian times. Because of it, an almost ineradicable displeasure with everything that is not exclusively Mexican often develops, regardless of the fact that the concept of what is exclusively Mexican may be as much a fiction as "the German Soul" or Hispanidad.

The work Octavio Paz undertook demanded, then, the intellectual courage to analyze the whole of the author's own emotional environment. It is therefore a job that only a Mexican could have done, for it required intimate and complete knowledge of the profound depths of a people's soul, demanding at the same time sufficient sensitivity to record the finest quivering of that soul and enough impartiality to observe it with an anthropologist's objectivity.

Perhaps all chauvinistic attitudes stem from a desire, more or less admitted, to impose on mankind a new scale of values (particularly spiritual values) based on the defects of a certain people in an attempt to convert those defects into the highest virtues. Because of this, the anti-chauvinist's first duty is to expose the defects in the spiritual life of a people. When this is done and accompanied by a zealous study of the psycho-sociological origin of those defects and their probable cure, as in "El Laberinto de la Soledad," we have the kind of contribution we can expect from every genuine patriot. How much each of our countries needs a book like this one of Paz's!

"Yes, we are locked up in ourselves," writes Paz. "We intensify our awareness of everything that separates us, isolates us, or distinguishes us. And our solitude increases because we do not seek out our fellow-countrymen, whether for fear of seeing ourselves in them or because of a painful defensive feeling in regard to our inner selves. The Mexican, with a propensity for sentimental effusion, avoids it. We live absorbed in thought, like those taciturn adolescent... possessors of who knows what secret, guarded by a sullen manner, only waiting for the propitious moment to reveal itself."

"Man," he adds in another chapter, "takes an active part in the defense of universal order, which is ceaselessly threatened by what is formless. And when that order collapses, he must create a new one, this time his own. But exile, expiation, and penitence must precede man's reconciliation with the universe. Neither the Mexicans nor the people of the United States have achieved that reconciliation. What is more serious, I fear we may have lost the very meaning of all human activity, which is to assure the rule of an order in which conscience and innocence, man and nature, coincide. If the Mexican's solitude is that of stagnant water, the North American's is that of the mirror. We have ceased to be sources."

Although strict and at times perhaps even too severe, this analysis of the Mexican temperament is certainly bracing, something which is always necessary and today so rare in critical thinking. When a country is capable of producing a writer who, like Octavio Paz, succeeds in portraying its defects so clearly, it must be concluded that those very defects, although still as corrosive as ever, are on the point of disappearing.

Of course, when we speak of a whole country and in historical terms, this disappearance may still be a long process. But when someone—and undoubtedly there are other critics like Paz in Mexico—has the integrity, independence of judgment, and prudence required to undertake a study like this, the root of the characteristic national faults is withering away.

Perhaps Octavio Paz, who continually shows himself perceptive in his book, does not realize that his very presence marks the way of the labyrinth. At any rate, he knows that at that exit lie "abundance, re-union, which is repose and happiness, harmony with the world." He is likewise aware that, like his own, each country now finds itself in a labyrinth, lacking authentic myths and seeking them, that is, seeking "a society that will not make man a tool... A human society."

E. L. E.

CAREER AMBASSADOR. By Willard L. Beaulac 262 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company.

AS a manual in American diplomacy—easy to take and in fact highly entertaining—Ambassador Beaulac's book will be difficult to beat. It ought to be required reading for those in Congress and out who think of our diplomatic corps and the State Department as nests of cookie-pushers in striped pants.

Mr. Beaulac will take them into the intense discomforts of tropical ports and the dangers of revolutions and riots. He will show them, simply and clearly, what difficult problems must be faced in a country like Spain during World War II or Paraguay in peacetime. The events of recent months have showed us with frightening clarity that the popular approach to diplomatic problems is oversimplified to a dangerous degree. The problems seem so easy to solve to those without responsibility and without a knowledge of all the factors involved.

Spain is the best example of that in Ambassador Beaulac's book. Except for Spain, incidentally, his career was entirely in Latin America. He spent two and a half years in Madrid as counselor from 1941 to 1944, a period when the State Department was under heavy fire from genuine and so-called liberals for not somehow bringing about the overthrow of the Franco regime. It was even considered outrageous that our Government should have been on courteous terms with Madrid. Those of us who have spent the years since 1936 in bitter disagreement with all that Franco represents ought to be the first to try to understand the inescapable mechanics of dealing with him. Mr. Beaulac was as critical of the Franco regime as anyone could be; he had no illusions and he does no whitewashing in this book. Yet he had a job to do, along with the others in the Madrid Embassy at the time.

My most interesting and probably my most important service was in Spain (he writes). Our politi-

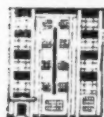
cal and military leaders were anxious that Spain should not become a theatre of war. They wanted Gibraltar preserved as an Allied base. They wanted to reduce the facilities that Spain might furnish to the Axis, and they wanted to obtain facilities from Spain for the Allies. They considered that those objectives were important to winning the war. Our Spanish policy was aimed at achieving those objectives, and it succeeded. At least the objectives were achieved.

A good deal has been written about Spain in World War II. Mr. Beaulac's chief, Ambassador Carlton Hayes; the British Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare; Winston Churchill, Sumner Welles, newspaper men galore, have all had their say. Ambassador Beaulac's contribution is a valuable addition to our knowledge, authoritative and persuasive, and it is certainly the most important part of his book.

There was much else, however, of interest and importance during the twenty-seven-year career that is still continuing with distinction in the author's new post of Havana, Cuba. Mr. Beaulac was our Ambassador in Bogotá, Colombia, at the time of the explosion that shook the hemisphere on April 9, 1948, while the International Conference of American States was in session. The account is vivid, although it adds little to what was known. His deduction that the Communists were to blame is plausible, and indeed the only possible deduction, although it is still without adequate proof.

The author's analysis of the Colombian political background ("complacent democrats," he calls Co-

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ionbians) and of how the country's undoubted democracy broke down is not very satisfying. He sees it as a process of urbanization followed by impoverishment of the workers who turned to violence through embitterment against the privileged, exploiting rich. That could be a reason for revolutionary communism, but there is little of that in Colombia despite what happened in 1948.

It would be wrong to give the impression that this is a study in diplomacy and nothing else. It is a human, pleasant, entertaining book about a man who never lost his sense of humor or his kindly feelings toward his associates. "The world is your home town," as he puts it, and he learned a good deal in it, such as the truth that "a Foreign Service officer needs to understand our inadequacies and failures just as much as he needs to appreciate our virtues if he is to advance the interests of the United States at his post." The veteran Matthew E. Hanna taught him that "there is no such thing as a diplomatic victory unless both sides win."

It is good to read about someone who goes to a hellhole somewhere in the tropics and can write: "I never wished to be anywhere else."

H. L. M.

LETTERS ON THE ORNITHOLOGY OF BUENOS AYRES. By W. H. Hudson. Edited by David R. Dewar. Foreword by Herbert F. West. 93 pp. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press.

IN 1869 and 1870 W. H. Hudson wrote twelve letters about the birds of Buenos Aires for the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London. David R. Dewar, a Scottish journalist, has recently discovered them in the sedate files of a sober scientific organization and edited them affectionately; and through the

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enterprise of Herbert F. West, Professor of Comparative Literature at Dartmouth, they are now published in a slender volume.

To admirers of Hudson, one of the great literary naturalists, these are fascinating pieces of work for several reasons. As far as anyone knows now, they are the first studies of birds written by him. He was 28 and 29 years old during this period. Having lived all his life in South America he could write English but had no idea how to spell many common English words, and Mr. Dewar has honestly preserved the errors.

Just previous to this period Hudson had been "collecting" (that is, shooting) birds for 90 cents a "specimen" (his spelling) for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. One of the birds he shot but did not quite kill broke into ecstatic song when Hudson retrieved him; and, as Mr. Dewar suggests, that act of musical forgiveness may have cured Hudson of commercial collecting. Mr. Dewar further suggests that in later life Hudson may have regretted these letters because they reveal a factor in his ornithological life that he would like to have forgotten. When he was living in England, he angrily crusaded against gunners and he left his estate to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

These letters are interesting for two more reasons. In the first place, they reveal Hudson, an obscure young bird student in South America, attacking Darwin with perceptible acerbity for an error in fact. Darwin, who had visited South America, had cited the fact that the pampa woodpecker "never climbs a tree" as evidence that exterior circumstances in nature may alter the character of a species. Hudson knew the pampa woodpecker intimately, and knew that he climbed trees and nested in trees when any were available. He felt contemptuous of a celebrated, revolu-

Acapulco.

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tionary scientist who could stake so much theory on
such faulty information.

In a later issue of the Proceedings, Darwin acknowledged that he must have committed an error and explained how it happened. Although Darwin wrote his reply in good temper, he was obviously taken back by the acidity of the comments of an unknown bird collector who did not even have a reliable address where mail could reach him.

In the second place, these letters are interesting because they disclose a reserved personality and an astonishing familiarity with birds. Hudson was not known to the general public until many years later—following a poverty-stricken miserable existence in a London boarding house kept by his wife. Somewhat bitter by the time he had won general recognition, he was hardly a congenial person. These early letters indicate that the taciturn streak was not what Darwin would have called an acquired characteristic but a fundamental part of his nature.

They also indicate that he must have begun associating with birds when he was very young. "Twenty years ago, which is as far back as my recollection goes," the carpintero was "a rather common bird," he wrote; and twenty years before 1870 Hudson was 9. His familiarity with the birds described in these letters goes far beyond identifying them and knowing their habits. He knew their personalities and temperaments. He knew their moods according to the changes in weather and their attitudes toward each other. He knew many of them as individuals. It is as though human beings did not exist for him; as though in his late twenties he had already made his life choice and had decided in favor of birds.

B. A.

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Current Attractions

By Vane C. Dalton

FROM BROADWAY TO AVENIDA JUAREZ

IT CANNOT be denied that Hollywood has played a major role in the development of international understanding on this hemisphere, that Latin America has acquired its general notion regarding the morals and mores in Anglo-Saxon America largely via the motion picture screen. And yet it is likewise undeniable that this notion, evolved in the prevalent terms of boy-meets-girl, of horse opera or the gangster underworld, is to a great extent inaccurate, or to say the least unrealistic. It is true, of course, that a fairly good average of the pictures exhibited in these parts actually conveys some truthful aspect of life north of the border; but these, unfortunately, are not sufficiently numerous, nor do they reach a sufficiently ample public, to offset the erroneous notion conveyed by the more popular kind.

The same can be said for most of the books by North American authors read here in Spanish translation. As against sound adult literature, lurid potboilers are in majority. And as regards the stage, plays by contemporary North American authors are still virtually unknown. It must be added, however, that this is not due to indifference on the part of our producers or public, but to the lamentably reduced realm of the native stage. Our dramatic theatre has declined to a degree where it hardly offers an outlet for the few valid native playwrights, much less for importations from abroad.

Still, it is a fact that the longest and most successful run on the local stage in recent years was scored by "A Street Car Named Desire," by Tennessee Williams. This play, presented by an excellent cast of ac-

tors was the talk of the town for months. It brought to thousands of native spectators, nurtured on cinema fare, an entirely new idea of drama in North America. It revealed to them that the theatre can still be the vehicle for conveying art and life; it imbued them with respect and admiration for the theatre in the United States, and it gave them a realistic glimpse of certain aspects of life in that country. It has, moreover, brought some helpful hints to our local playwrights, traces of which I have detected in some of our recent native productions. In short, this play, in its restricted capacity, served to spread intelligence and to build international understanding.

Now, in the current presentation of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, we behold another very effective project of promoting international understanding. This superb play is unquestionably superior in this respect to "A Street Car Named Desire," for the theme it presents has much broader implications. It does not deal with the individual destiny of several unusual characters; it presents a veritable cross-section of human existence, and its characters, for all their homespun regionalism, embody the character of millions of others. "Our Town," in other words, presents a human panorama of the country at large. It projects a picture of North American reality which is still largely unknown in our midst, and which in its deeply human substance surpasses national bound-



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daries. "Our Town," in fact, is not not an isle. It is, so to speak, a fragment of the universal human mainland.

Presented under the Spanish title of "Nuestra Ciudad," this play was produced by Fernando Wagner, the veteran international actor-director, under the auspices of the Mexican-North American Institute of Cultural Relations. This institute obviously deserves praise for its auspices of this presentation, for it is precisely in such undertakings as this that it fulfills its mission. Mexico knows and duly appreciates North American automobiles, radios, razor blades and chewing gum. It knows its popular dance music, its coca cola and its movie stars. But it does not know Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," nor does it know the kind of life in North America upon which this play is built. And I believe that it should know this life, for it is good, kind and humble—it is a life which in its essential significance, beyond the difference of language and custom, is very much the same as the life people live in Mexico—and its knowledge should therefore stimulate respect, comprehension and sympathy.

In undertaking the production of this play, Fernando Wagner tackled an extremely difficult assignment. For though it can be hardly regarded as novel or experimental in the United States, having been initially produced in 1938, its original structure may seem baffling and strange to a Mexican audience. In our midst, "Our Town," with its bare stage, its intercolor, and the peculiar development of its sequence, indeed represents a radical innovation. The main hazard which therefore confronts the producer is that our innately conservative audience, in its limited theatrical sophistication may not respond to the novelty, or be unduly distracted by it from the play's implicit significance.

Thus "Our Town" must be regarded as an experimental venture, as an attempt on the part of its producer to introduce a new form of dramatic art, to obtain approval and support among an unprepared pub-

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lie. In addition to this hazard, Fernando Wagner had to cope with multiple problems involved in its production. Aside from its translation—made by Margot Wagner and himself—which involved almost insurmountable idiomatic obstacles, the task of selecting an appropriate cast and of imparting to each member of it the exact significance of his or her respective role, must have been truly formidable. We may gather how difficult it must have been to translate Wilder's script into a synonymous Spanish, preserving all its subtle shade and nuance, by the impossibility to achieve the exact translation of its title. "Our Town," in literal translation, should have been "Nuestro Pueblo." But the word pueblo in Spanish means also people or nation. Thus Nuestro Pueblo would be quite likely misunderstood for Our People. And yet the Wagners achieved a very faithful translation.

As to the cast, the choice for the leading parts of Margot Wagner, Amparo Griffell, Emma Fink, José Luis Jiménez, Julio Monterde and Augusto Benedito, was done aptly and with fine discernment. Each renders a smooth and convincing performance. Throughout the entire play (a most unusual thing on the Mexican stage) there is not a single instance of overacting, and on the whole the performers evince a sound understanding of their parts. Especially admirable is the performance of Margot Wagner in the role of Emily Webb, and of José Luis Jiménez as narrator of the story. His manner, simple and unaffected, fittingly sets the tone of the story; he talks to the audience as casually as one might talk to a group of friends.

Having seen this play in its original English version, enacted by an excellent cast, places me, I am afraid, at a disadvantage in pursuing a fair estimate of Mr. Wagner's production. Naturally, and I believe inevitably, it departs considerably from the play I saw. Every language has its own innate vital essen-

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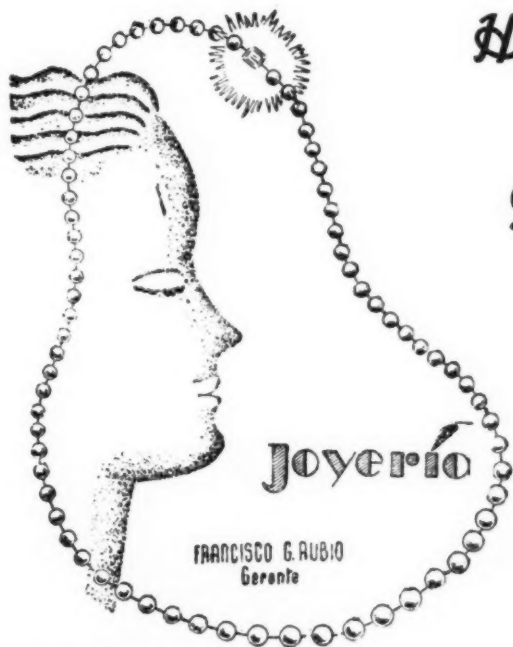
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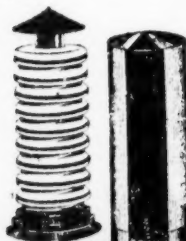
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ce which even in most skillful hands does not lend itself to precise translation. And yet the play preserves its essential meaning and substance—it delivers its message. Its profound humanity, its universal significance, though expressed in Spanish dialogue and conveyed by Mexican actors, are retained intact, and I hope that our audience will perceive this significance and thus be able to give the play the appreciation it deserves.

In the cause of art, the advancement of our languishing theatrical stage and the promotion of international culture, "Our Town" should meet with widest public approval.

The fate of this play, incidentally, will most likely determine the fate of the bilingual Pan-American Theatre, founded by Fernando Wagner in 1939 and suspended in 1943, for in this production he attempts to stage its revival.

During the past seven years Fernando Wagner has devoted his time to production of motion pictures and sundry administrative tasks on the staff of the National Institute of Fine Arts. Having recently returned to Mexico from an extensive journey to Europe, where he had the opportunity to study the theatre in France, Germany and Spain, Mr. Wagner intends to center his attention on the reorganization of the Pan-American Theatre, in the firm conviction that it will fill a definite need.

In the course of its six seasons the Pan-American Theatre produced a total of twenty-two plays, which included works by Bernard Shaw, Somerset Maugham, Eugene O'Neill, James Warwick, Clarence Day, Sam and Bella Spewack, Emlyn Williams, J. B. Priestley, S. N. Behrman, Irwin Shaw, John McGee and Percy Denham. Solely as an exposition of choice examples from the English language stage, the work performed by this organization was highly commendable. The plays performed in English by a select professional cast, attracted to the Palacio de Bellas Artes an unusually large attendance.

With conditions hardly more adverse in 1943 than they are today, the Pan-American Theatre achieved a unique record. It made a place for itself, which its dynamic founder is now determined to retrieve and solidify.

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Art and Personal Notes

P AINTINGS in oil, drawings and prints, by the Mexican artist José Arellano Fischer comprise the very interesting current exhibition at the Libreria Juarez Gallery (Avenida Juarez No. 102). Especially impressive are this artist's incisive and elegant prints and drawings, wherein he demonstrates his very unusual gifts for linear expression.

A LICE RAIÓN is exhibiting at this time a group of paintings and drawings at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milan No. 18). Pursuing a pristine expression by means of an aboriginal primitivism, this artist develops in her extremely simple compositions abstract visions of striking imagery.

E L CÍRCULO DE BELLAS ARTES (Avenida Juarez No. 58) presented in the course of last month a voluminous one-man show of paintings by Pedro Galarza Durán. Streets, portals, patios and churches of ancient Mexico provide the themes for most of this artist's work. Employing an Impressionist technique of arranging his pigments in heavy spatula or brush strokes, this painter adheres, however, to a delicately subdued palette, which lends an appropriate greyish tonality to his paintings, and thereby enhances the air of antiquity of the sights he projects.

F OLLOWING this exhibit, the above galleries are offering a collection of paintings in oil, depicting the Maya ruins at Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and Palenque, by Boris Antipovich, a Russian who has been residing in Mexico for many years. The brooding atmosphere of this archeological treasure-land permeates the canvases of this gifted painter.

G ALERIA ROMANO (José María Marroquí No. 5) is showing at this time a group of twenty landscapes and portraits in oil by Abel Gómez Meza. Sweeping vistas of mountains and valleys, ably brushed and powerfully composed, reveal this artist's exceptional talent.



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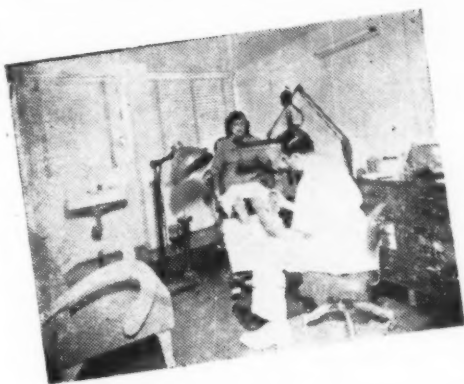
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ALFREDO ZALCE, one of the outstanding figures among the younger group of Mexican muralists, is presenting during this month a varied collection of his paintings in oil, tempera and gouache at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154).

AN extensive and highly varied collective exhibit of selected works by American art students veterans of the Second World War, is being offered during this month under the patronage of the National University of Mexico in the patio of the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas (San Carlos Academy). The components of this exhibition have been studying in the art schools of San Miguel Allende, Guanajuato, the Mexico City College and the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas.

The works comprising this exhibition were chosen by a jury composed of distinguished local art teachers and critics, which granted honorary awards to David Ramsey, Edwin Ruda, Maurice Lapp, Sidney Fossum, John Elbright, Sturges P. Mower, Al Weber and David Lemon. A total of 120 works by 93 painters makes up this exhibition.

THE house which José Clemente Orozco was building in Guadalajara, and which was left unfinished at the time of his death, will be completed by the National Institute of Fine Arts and is to be known as the Museum José Clemente Orozco. Furniture, paintings, books and other personal belongings of Mexico's greatest muralist are being gathered for this museum, in order to recreate the authentic background of his life and work.

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Patterns of an Old City . . .

Continued from page 19

my return as a surrender, as a final admission of defeat. It cannot be otherwise. The conflict has reached its end. I have given up the long struggle, and she is the winner. I have come back humbled and chastised to receive what's coming to me. I have had my rebellion—five years of it—my bitter fling, and now I must accept her mercy. She has played a patient game. She has waited, let time take care of things, trusted fate, as if she knew beforehand what would happen. She merely sat there all these years watching me at a distance, indulgent, gentle, discreet, writing me understanding and compassionate letters, never forgetting to enclose the check, never exacting anything, merely suggesting, merely hinting what might be best, ever cautious not to offend, not to stir up resentment, consistently playing the role of a resigned and eternally tolerant victim of an unfortunate circumstance, of a misunderstood, a totally blameless and well-intentioned victim of cruel fate, and perhaps of an unintended and and inadvertent ingratitude.

She paid fifty centavos for a long, sausage-shaped red balloon, and now, sitting on the iron bench in the Alameda, her eyes followed Larry as he raced back and forth over the gravelled walk, gleefully guiding it through the air. I should have taken him to a barber shop, she thought. His hair will be drooping over his eyes by the time we get there, make him look like a little savage—a little wild and woolly savage. . . . That balloon—nothing else matters to him now. Life is a fascinating adventure floating at the end of a string.

Yes. Life is. . . . Soon she'll be buying his balloons for him. . . . worrying about his haircuts, his table manners, his funny way of speaking English. . . . Morally rejecting him as the living evidence of my depravity, in her boundless forbearance and tolerance she will accept him, appropriate him, as still another victim of such depravity. I will never be able to keep him to myself.

Yes, my mother, she thought. She is, Jim used to say, incarnate possessiveness. Her place in the world, trivial, small yet always secure, has been always, entirely her own. She possessed my father wholly, until his final escape in death. And she has always possessed me. In her peculiar mind, she has never relinquished her hold on me, not even during these years I have been away. Jim was merely an unhappy intrusion, a sad error, an unpleasant incident. And she has, of course, never relinquished her possession of Arthur. She picked him for me, as she used to pick my dresses, rendered me helpless by bland coercion and intrigue, made me marry him, solely because she knew that thereby she would possess us both. And when she lost me, she still held onto him. She has kept him there at her side—her poor betrayed and abandoned son-in-law, a fellow-victim of her daughter's shocking aberration, a partner in disgrace—kept him there all these years, because she felt this might in some way help to retain her hold on me. . . . Yes, together they faced and lived down the scandal. The stalwart pair. . . .

There, dear friends, you have a glowing example of supreme courage. (Often, when immersed in such thoughts, righteous and rhetorical phrases like these shaped themselves in her mind. Through them she beheld her case conjecturally with the eyes of others. They defined the voice of public opinion, the common attitude of her townspeople, and in some curious way brought back to her mind the hazy image of Judge Staley, a friend of her father, an elderly gentleman of a booming voice and florid manner, who smoked big, black cigars, affected double-breasted white waistcoats and had a habit of pinching her chin.)

Yes, my friends—her thoughts continued through the urbane and resonant voice of the conjectural operator, a kind, self-sacrificing mother, a widow of modest material means, yet a highly respected and admired member of our community, who by unstinted effort and loving devotion rears a daughter, gives her a good schooling, a respectable name, a comfortable home, and guides her through an upright girlhood to an apparently ideal marriage. She invests her life in the sole aim to make her daughter happy. But what, we may ask, does she receive in the end? Grief, betrayal, ingratitude. The daughter wilfully destroys, wanton-

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ly throws away, everything her doting mother had so painstakingly provided for her.

And here you have a man—an average man, you might say, though outstanding for his sterling character. Not very young, but not old (he has postponed the thoughts of marriage until he was fully prepared to assume its responsibilities); not what you would call handsome—a bit colorless, a bit too tall and thin, but a kind and simple person, honest, industrious, dependable—cashier in the town's leading bank with a good salary, an excellent future and an enviable social position—in short, the type of man almost any sensible girl would be happy to get for a husband. But, my dear friends, as obviously eligible as he was, with all of the town's most desirable girls at his choice, he married the wrong one. And thus his reward too was betrayal, humiliation and grief.

But common suffering, strange to say indeed, can some times create an enduring bond of fellowship. The heartbroken mother and the cruelly deceived and abandoned son-in-law were not sundered by their shame and grief. The home he had created for the three, though sadly bereaved by the wayward woman's departure, remained intact. They found relief from their shame and loneliness sharing, as a mother and son might do, the friendly confines of this home.

But fate, my friends, metes out its penalty for sin (Here, Judge Staley's voice resounding in her mind, retaining its deep resonance, dropped to a lower, a more confidential tone, appropriately keyed to the disclosure of the more sordid details). All evil deeds can be, or course, ascribed to extenuating circumstances, and if we propose to condone this young woman, since fate itself has duly provided its penalty, her dereliction might be ascribed to the lamentable moral laxity produced by the abnormal conditions of wartime.

When the division training camp was established in the vicinity of our town, our normal customs underwent a sudden change. The presence of all these thousands of young men was naturally bound to exert its effect on the lives of our young women. On the whole, however, it was not an evil effect. Usually, a



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married woman knew how to keep her place. But there were, we cannot deny, some unfortunate exceptions. And as regards the case of this particular woman, if we should try to absolve her... we can only—

Don't try, she thought. Don't ever any of you try. Sure, I did it. I let him pick me up on a street corner. Cheap, gross, vulgar. I knew what I was doing. I could have ignored him. I could have rebuffed him and walked on. But I didn't. I couldn't do it. I did not want to do it. I wanted him. I knew from the first instant that I wanted him, that I needed him, and nothing else mattered. We drove out along Cansino's Road, in the car Arthur gave me for Christmas, that trim blue Pontiac roadster, and we parked off the road and right there in broad daylight I gave myself to him.

I saw him often after this, as often as he could get away from camp, and soon mother knew the truth—she is the one person whom I could never deceive, from whom I could never conceal anything—, while Arthur remained blind, and worried only because he thought the change in me was due to failing health. It lasted only three months and then the division was gone, and it did not end the way it might end in a story. Jim did not get killed. He came out a year and four months later, perfectly sound and undamaged, and he came back to take me away.

It was hard for the two of us to get by here in Mexico on his small G. I. scholarship allowance; but by the time Larry was born mother commenced enclosing the checks in her letters. Jim didn't like that. For him our poverty was never a hardship. We must stick it out somehow, he said. We'll come through all right. Must stick it out. In a couple of years he would wind up his studies, get his degree, and then we could go back to the States, locate somewhere and look for a job. We were sticking it out all right. We were pretty crowded in that one-room, kitchen and bath apartment, and it took us some time to get accustomed to eating black beans and rice at least twice a day.

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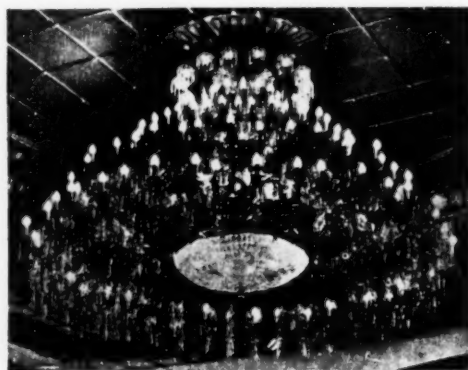
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But these things were really not important. We could always afford a streetcar trip on Sundays to Xochimilco, or we could walk a few blocks and sit here in the Alameda; we needed so little to be happy while we were together.

It is strange, she thought, that even now, when everything seems so perfectly clear, I cannot clearly remember how I felt when Jim died. Maybe it was because emotionally I died with him. It is strange that I cannot recall the precise details. It was on a Monday, and he came home in the afternoon with a slight cold, a cough, temperature. Complaining of a pain in his chest. He would be O.K. in the morning, he said. But in the morning he was delirious and when finally, with the help of the Señor and Señora Contreras, I got the elderly Mexican doctor to examine him, he said it was bronchopneumonia. He seemed improved two days later, and the old doctor said that he was on his way to recovery. But a complication set in, and his heart stopped beating in his sleep.

And it yet seems strange to me how I lived on, how my own heart went on beating after this happened, how, lacking a purpose, I lived on almost two years in the same room, going through the physical motions of keeping alive, yet remaining emotionally dead. Yes, there might have been a vague purpose, and that was not to surrender to my mother's will. I still had Larry and that was all I had and that has kept the purpose alive... And now, even this purpose seems to have died. I am going back... I am surrendering... Now I am...

No, my dear friends. (Judge Staley's mellow and persuasive voice again intruded on her thoughts) Self-destructive recalcitrance cannot be a sustained purpose in life. A day must come when—

Through the din of crowded streets she heard the remote peal of a clock bell and the hazy image of Judge Staley disappeared from the back of her mind.

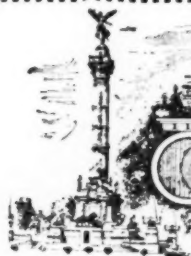
"Come, Larry," she said. "Come. We must go now. It is time for us to go. We'll have to start for the bus station soon." And clasping his little hand he led him cautiously through the traffic across the street, the red balloon trailing behind them in the air.

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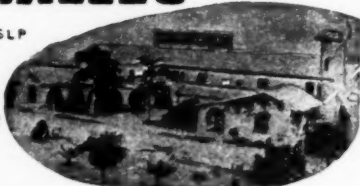
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Music by Chávez . . .

Continued from page 26

series of brief interviews with his lieutenants in such fields as the theater, sculpture, school music, and the Institute of Fine Arts and Literature's excellent publication "México en el Arte." After supper at home he spent the evening discussing with David Alfaro Siqueiros current problems of a semi-public art school in the provinces.

In everyday human relations, where professional duties are not at stake—with his keenly intelligent mother (now dead), his quiet and very charming wife Otilia, and the three children, Anita, Juanita, and Agustín—Chávez reveals the winning personal warmth so typical of Latin American family life. Señora de Chávez and the children have allowed in every way for the fact that Carlos Chávez is composer, conductor, government official, and international figure. In his home studio, his privacy is inviolable. But at meals or simply talking with guests and friends, he is anything but a martinet. I have seen him sit back, silent but smiling, nodding his head in agreement or shaking it in half-convinced astonishment while so volcanic a spellbinder as Rivera or Siqueiros held every eye and ear.

In 1949 Chávez returned from a long visit to Europe, which he had not seen since the early 'twenties. His family drove from Mexico City to New York to meet him, giving me and another friend of his a long-awaited opportunity to invite them to a New York "dinner at home." I remember well that delightful Sunday. We discussed all manner of trivia, listened to both serious and popular music on the phonograph, contrasted Mexican and New York manners, and weighed the virtues of apple juice, a novelty to our Mexican visitors.

Chávez was excited over plans for the future, which, at fifty, he found as full of activity and promise as when I first met him. Though he has given up the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, he will occasionally accept offers to appear as guest conductor with orchestras in Europe and the United States. But mostly he expects to compose and play the piano. Perhaps he will write a successor to his only published book, "Toward a New Music," issued in New York in 1937. Now, as always, he regards composition as the most important and rewarding of his multifarious vocations.

A book, I asked Chávez, on the symphonies of Beethoven and their interpretation? Perhaps—in two or three years. A book, perhaps, on Mexican music from the Conquest (and before) up to a young composer of today like Blas Galindo? Perhaps, but less like-



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ly. What Chávez wants most is to compose, and I have never known him to fail in getting what he wants most. He has a spacious, sun-flooded studio in his house high on the Lomas de Chapultepec overlooking Mexico City and much of the Valley of Mexico. He has a house in Acapulco, where the climate and the Pacific somehow combine to help his work. In those two places he will compose. He is completing a concerto for a violin and orchestra—a commissioned work—and he bulges with ideas for many other compositions, large and small.

Though he has already written such distinguished music as the "Sinfonía de Antígona," the "Sinfonía India," "H. P.," "La Hija de Colquide," the Concerto for Four Horns and Orchestra, a piano concerto, and a large group of vocal, choral, orchestral, and instrumental pieces, Carlos Chávez seems at the near edge of full maturity as a creator. Given the proper ambience and circumstances—and I surmise from experience that he will produce them both—he may rightly be expected to enrich the modern repertoire with the best of his highly individual music.

It would have been easy for Chávez, an erudite and practiced craftsman, to win widespread popularity as a composer. He could have strung together Mexican or pseudo-Mexican folk or popular melodies in "rhapsodies" in the manner of Liszt or Enesco, exploiting the exotic quality of Indian and mestizo music. The results would have been popular in the broadest sense: he has shown in his *Overtura Republicana* and *Sinfonía India* that he is capable of it. But this sort of arranging—stitching together musical materials already in existence—is not Chávez' idea of a composer's work—except for special occasions. To be sure, the music of the Mexican people, of many Mexican peoples, is nearly always inherent in his work. It is present as French music is present in Ravel or Milhaud, Russian in Prokofiev, American in Copland.

Of the numerous avatars of Carlos Chávez, the most interesting to me has always been Chávez the composer. He is determined to compose music at once Mexican, contemporary, and wholly his own. Because it is Mexican music, it is full of complex rhythms; because it is entirely contemporary, it is webbed with dissonant counterpoint; because it is his own, it is intelligent and austere, entirely uncompromising, and not notably sensual. Rarely is this music overpoweringly

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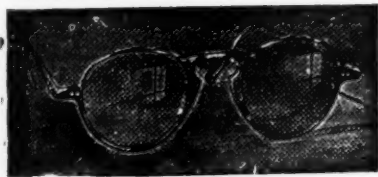
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popular at first acquaintance. Inclined to be gnomie, it unfolds its structure and meanings only to careful attention and repeated hearings. In human terms it might be described as shy and reserved, and its significance clarifies gradually. Only by cooperating with it can the listener grasp its quality. But it is rich in musical emotion and strong enough to provide enduring satisfactions.

There is not space here to discuss Carlos Chávez' accomplishments as a music educator, as a creator of audiences, as the man who has instigated the publication of scholarly books on many musical subjects, the man who, through wisely delegated power, has influenced the theater, the dance, literature, painting, and sculpture of his country. And a whole article could be devoted to his tours with the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico. Visiting nineteen Mexican cities and towns and El Paso, Texas, the orchestra brought to tens of thousands their first contact with symphonic music. Of the Mexican places visited on these tours, only three have more than 135,000 people—and five have less than 25,000. Audiences everywhere, neither played down to nor assaulted with music beloved only by the initiated, responded magnificently.

Clearly, Carlos Chávez belongs with the outstanding figures of Mexico's post-Revolutionary renaissance, with José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Diego Rivera, among the painters; Alfonso Reyes, José Vasconcelos, Moisés Sáenz, and Antonio Caso among the educators-writers—Mexicans all, but in a sense universal. Some of these artists and writers are better known than others to the outside world. But all have influenced their own time, if only by making Mexico and its mental climate somehow different than it would have been without them. The courage and the rocklike integrity that prevent Chávez from diluting either his gifts or his labors make it certain that, his native talents being what they are, the very best of what he has to give is still to be created.

Nahuatl Spring Song . . .

Continued from page 16

this be funny, it is a much more engaging form than that recently raging through some nations that boast of their superior civilization.

Before the carnival I had a handful of friends and a number of acquaintances. Afterwards, I had many close friends and numberless acquaintances. My flying white shoes, always conspicuous in the dim light, and my ability to walk upright after four days of celebration commanded something compounded of amusement, affection, and respect. I went among those people to spend a month, and stayed six.

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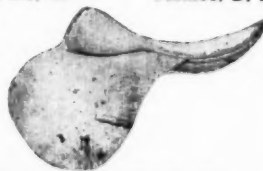
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Green Gold in Yucatán . . .

Continued from page 24

other top-grade workers earn up to 80 pesos. Such pay, with housing and other benefits considered, is fabulous in Mexico. But it is not out of line with the high production records Medina's methods have achieved. "If it wasn't profitable we couldn't do it," he explains tersely.

Five years ago Medina began his conquest of the very heart of Yucatán. A first step was to hire Don Drury, a lean young lumber engineer from the University of Washington who knew plywood fabrication as well as Mexican timber. Drury installed the plywood plant, then became general manager of all operations while Medina, flying back and forth between Yucatán and his new Mexico City offices, organized a company to develop the virgin mahogany reserves of the inner jungle. Raising capital was no trick now; he turned down more would-be investors than he accepted, including one capitalist who made a fabulous offer for the whole enterprise. "Sell out? What would I do then?" Medina demanded. The same spirit that had built Colonia Yucatán was carried into the new organization. Drury was included as a partner as well as employee.

The mahogany production center, Zoh Laguna, may be the only town in history that was literally founded by air. It gets its name—Dry Lake—from one of the tragedies that helped to defeat the Mayas. Southern Yucatán, for all its rich forests, has practically no surface water. Rainfall sinks to the underlying strata of limestone and sometimes hollows out subterranean reservoirs. Occasionally the roof of one of these collapses, creating a deep open pit. But, as in this case, the limestone lakebed itself often collapses in time, and what had seemed a plentiful water supply vanishes overnight. That sequence apparently accounted for the nearby Mayan ruins that Medina's timber scouts spotted from the air.

But the site was strategic, and not far away was a brush-grown air strip once used by a chicle expedition. Medina's trail blazers made this their goal, reaching it as the chicle hunters had done, by hacking a 150-mile footpath from the tiny Caribbean port of Chetumal. Once they had enlarged the clearing, an amazing operation began. Hundreds of men, a power plant, provisions, water, and even mules were flown in by an airlift that continued for a year. Meanwhile a fleet of bulldozers and trucks began clawing a high-way from Chetumal.

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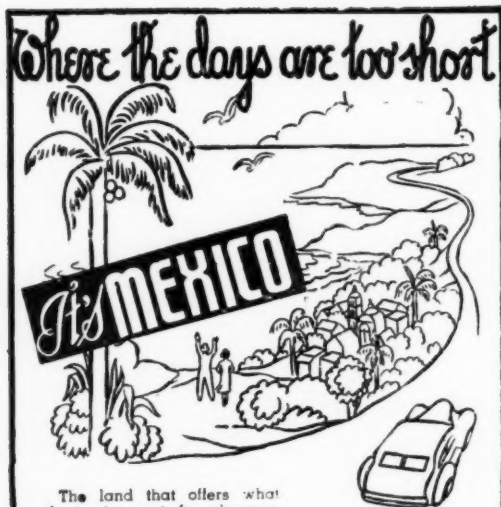
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houses flown down from Colonia Yucatán. Radial roads had been cut to the best timber stands and to distant water pits. Production was under way. The first truck to reach to town, in early 1947, was quickly started back to Chetumal with mahogany bound for Jacksonville, Florida.

"This is no old-time timber raid, it's a mahogany farm," Medina emphasizes, pointing out a nursery of millions of seedlings from which the forest is replanted, as fast as it is cut. "Zoh Laguna will be producing fine timber fifty years from now."

Every phase of the operation is planned for the future. The road from Chetumal, which opens an area as big as Ohio, is graded, sturdily bridged, and graveled to serve as the first link of a highway system that eventually will connect the peninsula with the body of Mexico. Although drillers have pierced the limestone for a wide radius in search of an underground cistern, the town's water is still hauled great distances by tank truck. But Medina is confident that he will take care of that—by pipeline, if necessary.

Meanwhile, the most serious problem has been conquered. An unceasing drainage and sanitation campaign, plus regular use of DDT, has beaten malaria and dysentery, the twin threats to health in the tropics. Vaccination and inoculation take care of yellow fever, smallpox, and other such menaces. Not the mill, but a modern hospital on a breeze-swept rise in the jungle is the real heart of the whole operation. Its staff is rapidly proving that health in Yucatán can be protected as successfully as in the southern United States, where, from Florida to Texas, what we now think of a tropical diseases were a constant drain only a few decades ago.

Medina still worries over his one error at Zoh Laguna. When Mexico closed a northern camp for Polish refugees soon after the war, he offered to take two hundred families into his new community, having heard that they were sturdy, hard-working home builders. Those who came went to work enthusiastically, but they soon slowed down, became restless and moody. Within six months the last contingent was trucked back to Chetumal. "No imagination," says Medina. "They kept talking about getting to the United States, the land of the future—and here was the future under their noses."

A majority of Medina's men and their families—some ten thousand persons in all—are of Mayan or part-Mayan blood. They are better fed, better housed, and in better health than any group in the history of their people. They are rearing literate children, learning new skills, developing a new spirit of initiative. In fifteen years Medina's enterprise and intelligence have raised them from the subsistence level to the status of important producers and consumers, builders of a stronger economy for their country.

Medina has demonstrated how the many great untouched areas in tropical America can be made productive and habitable to serve the mounting population—and by local enterprise, without huge initial investment, foreign loans, or government help.

"Here in Yucatán," he says, "lumbering is only the beginning." But he finds a valuable lesson in the



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evidence that the Mayan decline was due, partly at least, to stripping then overworking and exhausting the thin soil. This suggests that the successful reconquest of Yucatán will be made not by fighting the jungle but by cultivating it. After wood products, the evident possibilities are drugs, resins, industrial oils. "And who knows what else?" Medina says. "No one has really looked as yet."

Fortress Monasteries . . .

Continued from page 22

On the interior of the church engaged columns support heavy stone pointed arches, separating the bays of the nave, which are roofed with simple groined vaults, unlike Huejotzingo, the nave of which has ribbed vaulting with intermediate ribs. The ceiling of the chancel, however, has a system of lierne vaulting almost exactly like that in the first bay of the nave at Huejotzingo, but going one step further in introducing an additional circle of ribs at the center of the star formation. Such a vaulting system was never used in the early Gothic work in Europe, and, although not uncommon in the later work in England, it is interesting that the type here follows very closely the vaulting of the two latest Gothic cathedrals in Spain—Salamanca (the new cathedral) and Segovia, which, in spite of the fact that Gothic had been almost entirely replaced elsewhere by Renaissance forms, were contemporaneous with this work in Mexico, Salamanca having been built between 1513 and 1560 and Segovia between 1522 and 1577.

The original altar at Acolman had at some time been removed and replaced by a modern altar which, fortunately, has, in turn, recently been removed and its place taken by an old altar much more in keeping with the character of the interior. Monochrome frescoes of heroic size on either side of the altar portray bishops, clergy, and other personages of the church. Other early frescoes, partially obliterated, adorn the walls of the cloisters of the adjacent monastery.

In the cloisters, single columns alternate with clustered columns to support round Romanesque arches, heavier and lower than their Spanish Romanesque ancestors, with sculptured devices between; while in the gallery above, columns resting on panelled pedestals and with heavy, carved Romanesque capitals supporting smaller round arches cast a pattern of light and shade on the herringbone brick floor. The ceiling of

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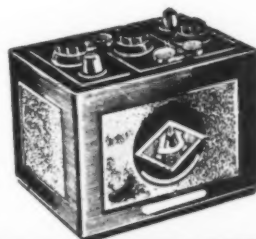
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the gallery is of wood beams, interrupted at the corners by elliptical stone arches. Segmental arched doorways lead through thick walls to the monastery rooms. Of especial interest among the multiplicity of rooms are the friars' cells, where each room has a small alcove with a built-in window seat for reading. Built into the opposite wall of the narrow alcove is a place for the friar to put his feet as he studied or gazed out onto the fields of maguey and maize.

The monastery of Actopan is on the highway leading down to the capital. With its tall rather Moorsque tower, it dominates the town which can be reached by a short, paved turnoff from the highway, only 75 miles north of Mexico City.

The monastery was built by the Augustinians in 1546 as a fortress and mission in the land of the Otomí Indians. Fray Andrés de Mate was the architect. The group is especially interesting for its combination of styles. The tower has a definitely Saracenic flavor; the thick walls and deep, splayed windows give all the appearance of a medieval fortress; the cloisters, with segmental arches, pointed Gothic arches with buttresses between, and round Renaissance arches vying with each other, are nevertheless harmonious withal; and the monumental and dignified Plateresque entrance of the church sets off a group which, though somewhat bizarre in effect, has a charm not often attained in such a combination of styles.

The front of the church has a sloping battlemented roof; and along the sides, tall stone sentry boxes, regularly spaced at the top of the buttresses, interrupt the battlements.

In plan and in equipment, the monastery has many features in common with the monastery at Acolman, a similar maze of rooms built around cloistered patios, and the same friars' cells with footrests. Of especial interest are the great frescoes, in black and white, on the walls of the main stairway of the monastery.

The Augustinian monastery at Yecapixtla, in the state of Morelos, begun in 1536, one of the very earliest, has a fine rose window above the entrance, sentry boxes interrupting the battlements, as at Actopan, and an exceptionally fine, sturdy bell-tower.

The first of the Dominican monasteries in Mexico City was long ago destroyed by a flood and replaced by a later group of buildings, so that of the earlier Dominican monastic establishments of which anything remains, that at Coyacán, a suburb immediately south of Mexico City, with its adjacent Church of San Juan Bautista, is most readily accessible. The monastery, dating from 1530 is now in ruins, but the church, built

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in 1583 and facing what is now the main plaza of the suburb, stands as a fine example of early architecture. Especially noteworthy is the massive tower and bell-tower, added to the structure in 1622. The interior of the church is one of the few in central Mexico without a vaulted ceiling. The ceiling is timbered, supported by two rows of arches. The side gateway to the churchyard, close to the church, is of special interest as an important example of Aztec influence on the ornament, done while native traditions were still fresh in the minds of the Indian artisans.

The question of the influence of ancient Mexican designs on Christian work has long been the subject of much controversy. Bernard Boyan in "History of Spanish Architecture" states: "...the influence of ancient Mexican designs was... absolutely negligible in Spain, and practically negligible in Mexico itself. In Mexico it appears occasionally but much that is attributed to Indian design is merely due to the poor Indian craftsmanship employed." To be sure, the geometric textile designs of Mitla, the sinuous serpents and squatting Oriental figures of Xochicalco, and the carved serpents' heads of a number of ancient Indian sites were not directly applied to Christian structures—the Spanish friars and priests would not have stood for it—but the spirit and the symbolism that gave rise to the ancient Indian ornament is evident on Christian structures, even though some of it may be somewhat surreptitious and it is not all due to poor Indian craftsmanship. The friar's cord terminating in the head of a snake, the humanized sun and moon, fruits and vegetables unknown in Europe, and Indian faces and figures were not mere mistakes.

Yet, this Indian influence in design shows a peculiar paradox. That side gateway at Coyoacán, showing an abundance of Indian influence, is perhaps exceptional for an early structure. In most of the work of the first century after the Conquest, Indian symbols were scattered, often hidden. The separation of the races was still apparent. Discipline of the Indian had to be maintained, Indian idolatry subdued; and conversion to Christianity was paramount. In general, it was not until later, when the Spaniards felt that they had a firmer hold on the Indian population and when the races had begun to fuse, that the pent-up creativeness of the Indians could be released, and the two traditions also began to fuse and produce a Mexican architecture.

Another example of an early Dominican monastic establishment is to be found at Tepoztlán, in the state of Morelos. That comparatively unimportant but typical Aztec village which is overlooked by the little temple dedicated to the versatile God of Pulque, although not far from Cuernavaca, used to be accessible

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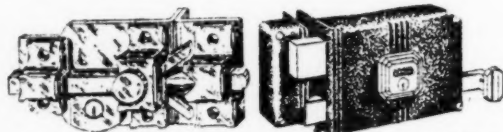
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only on foot or on horseback, but since it has achieved fame as the subject of two books, one by Robert Redfield and one by Stuart Chase it has merited a good paved road. The monastery there, begun in 1559 by the Dominican friar, Francisco de Becerra, stands well back of the gateway to an immense atrium and is distinguished by two asymmetrical small towers on the front of the church. The church has unusually large battresses the full height of the structure and a gabled entrance of singularly interesting Indian carved ornament, with the sun and the moon occupying the spandrels of the arched doorway, along with stars, animals, and other Indian symbols. Here is a case where remoteness of location probably contributed to greater freedom for the Indian artisans, under less constant surveillance than at Acolman, for example, close to the center of Spanish domination. Winged cherubs adorn the arch over the exquisitely paneled door; and, in the tympanum above, a crowned Virgin with Christ child a small window. The rather ruined cloister, surrounding a patio now filled with banana trees, has a battlement all around the roof. From there an outside stairway leads up to the roof of the church, where a curious belfry on one side and a forest of merlons, together with the weird, rocky crags surrounding the village, give the place the appearance of a setting for some fairy tale.

• • •

The Carmelites were later in starting their work, most of the existing examples dating originally from shortly after the turn of the century. Not far from Mexico City, in the suburb of San Angel (now officially Villa Obregón), is a monastery begun in 1615 after the plans of Fray Andrés de San Miguel, a lay brother of the Carmelite order. It was dedicated two years later to San Angelo Mártir, whence the name of the town which grew up around it. Several domed chapels and patios comprise the group, which is especially interesting as a veritable museum of fine old tile work. Of curious interest is the crypt, recently restored by the Department of Colonial Monuments, with a vaulted and decorated ceiling and a colored tile wainscot. Though much of the monastery is in a bad state of preservation, the cluster of domes, some of them of a later period, forms one of the most picturesque sights around the capital.

In a slightly earlier example, those discriminating and not too unworried nature-lovers used rare taste and discretion in choosing for a retreat just about the loveliest spot that could have been found in North America. Not far to the southwest of the capital, in a forest clearing almost 10,000 feet above sea level, are the ruins of a monastery which, according to the

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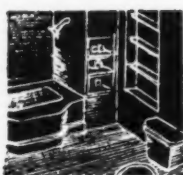
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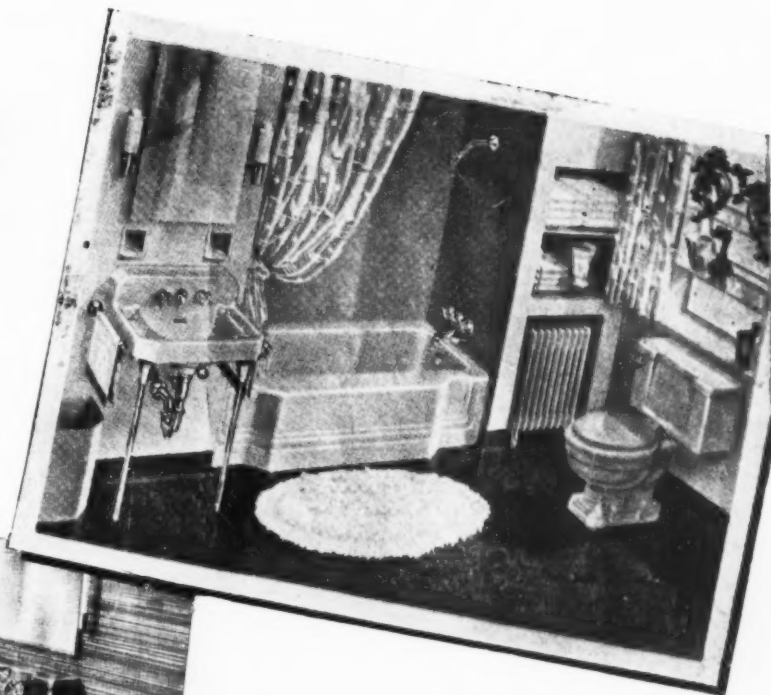
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cornerstone, was built in 1606 and dedicated to Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo. The pine forest surrounding the ruins crowns one of a series of mountain peninsulas (known as the Desierto de los Leones) which look down over the valley of Mexico. Unlike the monastery schools already described, this was a true monastery, built as a monastic retreat. The bare-foot Carmelite friars who went there as hermits, to judge from reports, can hardly be said to have endured untold hardships. Some of the walls and some of the tile domes are still standing, and bases of columns outline the great cloisters and patio. Except for an underground labyrinth used for penance, there is little else left of what at one time must have been a beautiful group of buildings with still lovely gardens, high up in the sunshine, away from the noise and turmoil of the city, and hemmed in by the tall murmuring pines.

There were other monastic orders which played a part in the development of Mexico, notably the Jesuits, but, like the Carmelites, most of their influence came later. In the sixteenth century (nearly all of this work just described was done long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock) progress from the standpoints of religion, education, and architecture was due, in great measure, to the work of the "big three" of the early monastic orders in Mexico—the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Augustinians—and the architectural form which their work took was the last vigorous attempt of the Gothic.

The amount of work that these orders did was truly prodigious. By the end of the sixteenth century, only seventy-five years after the Conquest, there were four hundred monasteries, built by these brotherhoods, scattered throughout New Spain. Almost half of them had been built by the Franciscans, with the Dominicans and Augustinians close to a tie for second place, followed by the Carmelites and Jesuits still far in the rear.

One of the lesser and almost forgotten examples of these early massive Gothic mission churches is to be found in the now rather unimportant village of Acatzingo, not far along on the branch of the Puebla road that leads to Jalapa and Vera Cruz. Approaching from the direction of the latter cities one suddenly sees, looming up above the trees, this tall, severe, and dignified structure, appearing for all the world like a medieval fortress standing guard over the lives and souls on the village square below. It is severe to an extreme and its place in the hearts of the people has been taken by a later and more elaborate and typical



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church on an adjacent side of the plaza; but the ribbed Gothic vaulting of its deserted, bare, quiet, and majestic interior connotes an eloquence of earnest pioneering when, in the days of the early missions, it must have given cover and comfort and solace to many questioning souls, and, in its majesty, projected a silent blessing "like the protecting hand of God inverted above them."

Though many were built, a great number of these churches have long since been replaced by later, more elaborate edifices. Time has taken its toll; and "modern progress" has erased them in its sweeping advances; but it is to be hoped that the National Department of Colonial Monuments, now so keenly alert to their value in historical architecture, will continue its good work in preserving for posterity that small remaining group which played such an important part in the early attempts at Christianization of the first Europeanized Americans.

Un Poco de Todo . . .

Continued from page 31

sult of his work he can detect telltale chemical changes in a fertilized egg that will bring on cancer long before the embryo's heart begins to beat.

Retarded fertilization causes some cells to develop in the embryonic stage so that they never differentiate—that is, form eyes, noses and other organs and tissues. Cells that fail to differentiate end as cancer cells. When eggs are overripe the embryo turns into cancer.

Dr. Witschi experiments with amphibians. At first the egg of an amphibian which has been fertilized but retarded in its development grows much like a normal egg. At the stage when nerves, bones, glands, skin and other tissues ought to form undifferentiated embryonic cells are produced. These cells destroy the normal cells, indicating they are cancerous.

Dr. Witschi also has found that by raising or lowering the temperature he can accelerate or retard the growth of cancer. At some stages, low temperature will reserve the trend toward cancer. Refrigerated eggs of amphibians thus have been induced to develop into normal animals.

Latin America Strides Toward Democracy

Continued from page 18

when their party split. Then the Liberals won election after election until their party divided in 1946. In Brazil last year, when the Opposition candidate Getulio Vargas won the elections from the Government's nominee, it was a source of wonder and acclaim throughout the hemisphere.

Latin Americans are sticklers for legal and institutional forms: the worst dictators will pass laws or draw up new institutions to legalize their tyranny. The classic pattern is for a military group to seize power by a coup or revolution, then to engineer a so-called "democratic election," thus becoming a con-

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stitutional government" by the "will of the people"—the same few men being involved all along and "the people" having little if anything to do with it all. That is what Venezuelans fear in the elections due next year and that is what happened in Peru. When President Arias of Panama wanted to extend his four-year term to six he tried to do it by switching from the 1946 to the 1941 Constitution.

* * *

This craving for legality is a heritage from Spain and Portugal, where the tradition descends from Roman law. Everything must be written, signed and sealed in due form, unlike the common law heritage of the Anglo-Saxon countries, where the substance of freedom means infinitely more than the form.

It is this same instinct that impels Latin-American politicians to form parties and run under their banners. In reality, personalism is the rule; people vote for a man, not for a party or a program. It was the extraordinary personality of Luiz Carlos Prestes that made communism such a force in Brazil and not the dogmas and doctrines of the Kremlin. In the same way, it was the equally great personal magnetism of Getulio Vargas that led to his victory on a democratic platform in a democratic election in the same country last October. Previously there was no "eternal vigilance" in Brazil, but there is beginning to be, and President Getulio Vargas, who was a dictator for fifteen years, must now be a democrat.

The tradition of the strong Executive is bound to die a hard and slow death. It has such deep roots in Latin-American history.

Argentina is a fascinating and discouraging study in the growth of totalitarianism, and therefore in how to lose democracy.

Colombia is another example of the lost battle, for it had an honest, tolerant, two-party democracy of Liberals and Conservatives and threw it away by allowing extremists to take the field. It was then inevitable that the victorious party—in this case the Conservatives—would destroy the existing democracy.

Sometimes democracy can be destroyed as effectively by communism or radicalism as it can by fascism. In trying to achieve a more or less legitimate social revolution, Guatemala got itself tied into knots by Communist elements. When the lid blew off in Bogotá, Colombia, on April 9, 1948, during the Inter-American Conference, it was foreign Communists who moved in to take temporary advantage of the chaos.

In two countries—Peru and Venezuela—genuine, popular, radical movements gained a large degree of power and then lost control because they tried to do

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too much too fast and because they were not and could not be true to their democratic principles. Both the APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) in Peru and the Acción Democrática in Venezuela were lured into totalitarian methods of the Left in trying to squelch militarism and reaction.

Some countries have more democracy than others; some are striving harder for the goal than others. The need and the appeal to us in the United States is for understanding and encouragement. One of the complaints that North American visitors continually hear is that the United States treats the democracies and the dictatorships exactly alike. There is a feeling that the democratic virtues should be recognized and rewarded and the tyrannies at least discouraged. At the same time every country wants the United States to keep out of the internal affairs of the whole of Latin America. They want to work out their own problems; they have a traditional fear and suspicion of the Colossus of the North. The United States cannot impose democracy anywhere; it can only set an example and, in the State Department's words, "make every legitimate and useful effort to encourage democratic and constitutional procedures."

The problem is to find the degree of democracy possible and suitable to the particular country and to go on from that toward ever greater democracy.

In Morelia . . .

Continued from page 14

The peace of the street was suddenly broken by shrieks of laughter and finger-pointing. Two white men and two white women jumped out of a touring car before it quite came to a standstill. They were dressed in outlandish cowboy and cowgirl outfits, with garish blouses of orange and blue satin, boots and spurs, and Texan ten-gallon hats. They wore big imitation revolvers hanging from belts about their waists. Both women were plump, and heavily painted, and they were hilarious at the sight of the Indian family serenely trotting to their home in the country. Other Indians among the booths paused to look up in some amazement at such fantastic and obviously counterfeit attire. They exchanged looks with each other and shook their heads. Amusement and contempt mingled in their expression. Some muttered the word "gringo," as if it were a synonym for craziness.

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The fatter of the women began to imitate the Indian trot. The other three fell in line, more in high spirits than in ridicule. Then the taller of the men caught sight of us in the shelter of a doorway and shouted, "Hey, look! There's some real white folks!" The burlesque trotting halted. The women, out of breath and giggling, adjusted their cowgirl hats, and the shorter fellow with a friendly grin yelled across the street. "What do you folks think of this funny dump?"

Like the protecting waters that rushed back into the Red Sea, a slow-moving motortruck loaded with donkeys blocked the way a moment. Under Señor Sánchez's expert guidance we made the sanctuary of one of the ubiquitous little churches and escaped the genial overtures of our fellow countrymen.

That evening during dinner it was almost a relief to see that it was not only Americans who sometimes make unsavory public displays of themselves. Having noted all through the day the natural good behavior of Mexican children, how they obeyed and seemed content with whatever they had, we were treated to a case of tantrums by the four-year-old son of the Spanish hotel proprietor. When the boy was served something that did not appeal to his Spanish palate, he created a terrific scene, throwing himself melodramatically on his back on the floor and shaking his heels in defiant fury at his nurse and his embarrassed mother. Evidently he had much less respect for his Creole mother than he did for his Spanish father, for when the latter appeared and merely glared at the brat, the kicks and shrieks subsided instantly. Arising promptly and climbing up into his chair, the muchacho hung his head over his plate and began to eat his porridge or his spinach like a chastened lamb. Being male and half-Spanish, he might defy mestizo nurse and white Creole mother. But before a European-born father—well, he knew differences at the age of four, even in a land where "equality" is pregnant with emphasis.

Dr. Hoagland was suffering from acute pains in his stomach and had stayed in bed sipping on orange juice, but he insisted he did not yet want a doctor. He was in some doubt as to the skill and judgment of the provincial physician. Assuring us that he would be feeling fit in the morning, he urged us to go out for the evening. But there was no night life in Morelia, and we certainly were not eager for more entertainment that day. However, we strolled across the side street to the modernistic hotel and there amid the chromium and red leather and black-glass table



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tops, all looking strictly un-Spanish, we sipped Coin-treau. The atmosphere was not congenial, though it was in no sense rowdy.

A few groups were sitting about apparently trying to create an impression of sophistication to match the pseudo-smart *décor*. We soon left and took a turn about the thick-leaved plaza under the stars, which had come out in fresh luminosity after the rain. The wandering Venus, which the ancient Tarāseñs worshiped as a goddess, far outdid the fixed stars in brilliance. And by starlight the cathedral's pink towers were even more lovely and more mellow than by sunlight.

The air was fresh and cool. The vendors had folded their tents and departed. Citizens, still sitting on the benches, talked in subdued tones, as if it were a tradition to talk softly at night in this plaza. When the cathedral bell struck ten full and silvery strokes, we got up and strolled back to the former Bishop's palace, enjoying a kind of nostalgic pleasure in ascending the gracious stairs.

Doña Chabela . . .

Continued from page 12

penders, came out of a bedroom holding a bottle of beer. He looked balefully at everybody, spat, finished the beer, and threw the bottle into a tub containing a withered palm with two wet bathing dresses and a paper bag hanging on it. Then the priest arrived to call. He wanted some honey for his cough. He sat down with us. Suddenly Doña Chabela started typing again; Conchita and the priest chatted. This went on for some time. Then the priest jumped up and turned pale.

"It's just a little wounded hen, padre," said Doña Chabe, still typing. "Did she peck you?"

The man who had drunk the beer fetched another

bottle from a carton on which a bantam cock had been perching, opened it, and swilled noisily. The man and woman who had eaten grapes came back, leading a little pig on a string.

"Look, Chabe, we bought him," they said.

At last I got up to go.

"Won't you stay for lunch?" said Doña Chabela. She took the paper out of the machine and tore off the lower half. "I have written down all the instructions for planting banana trees in your pit. They'll suck up all the moisture. And here's where you can get good ones. It's a friend of mine, a most cultured woman, who has a house in a big huerta on the outskirts of Guadalajara. She lives there all alone with three dogs and sells plants of every class. She has very beautiful hydrangeas. Don't forget to take the book. Poetry transports me to the stars. By the way, while you were away Don Amilear left his shop. He asked me to tell you. He's not going to be a butcher any more. He's gone to Los Altos where he has an uncle. You know, up there all the houses are built of hewn stone, and the people have eyes as blue as morning glories. My friend is a most honest woman and you can deal with her with every confidence in every way, but don't pay more than one peso less than she asks for each banana tree. They should be a meter high—if she has any, that is. I don't think she has just now. But you could get some hydrangeas, though they aren't any good in your pit. You must promise to come to lunch another day. We have lunch at two, or three, unless it's late."

Certainly Doña Chabela changes and glitters like the most lively opal. I always enjoy seeing her.

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